

Ireland's
enduring
divisions

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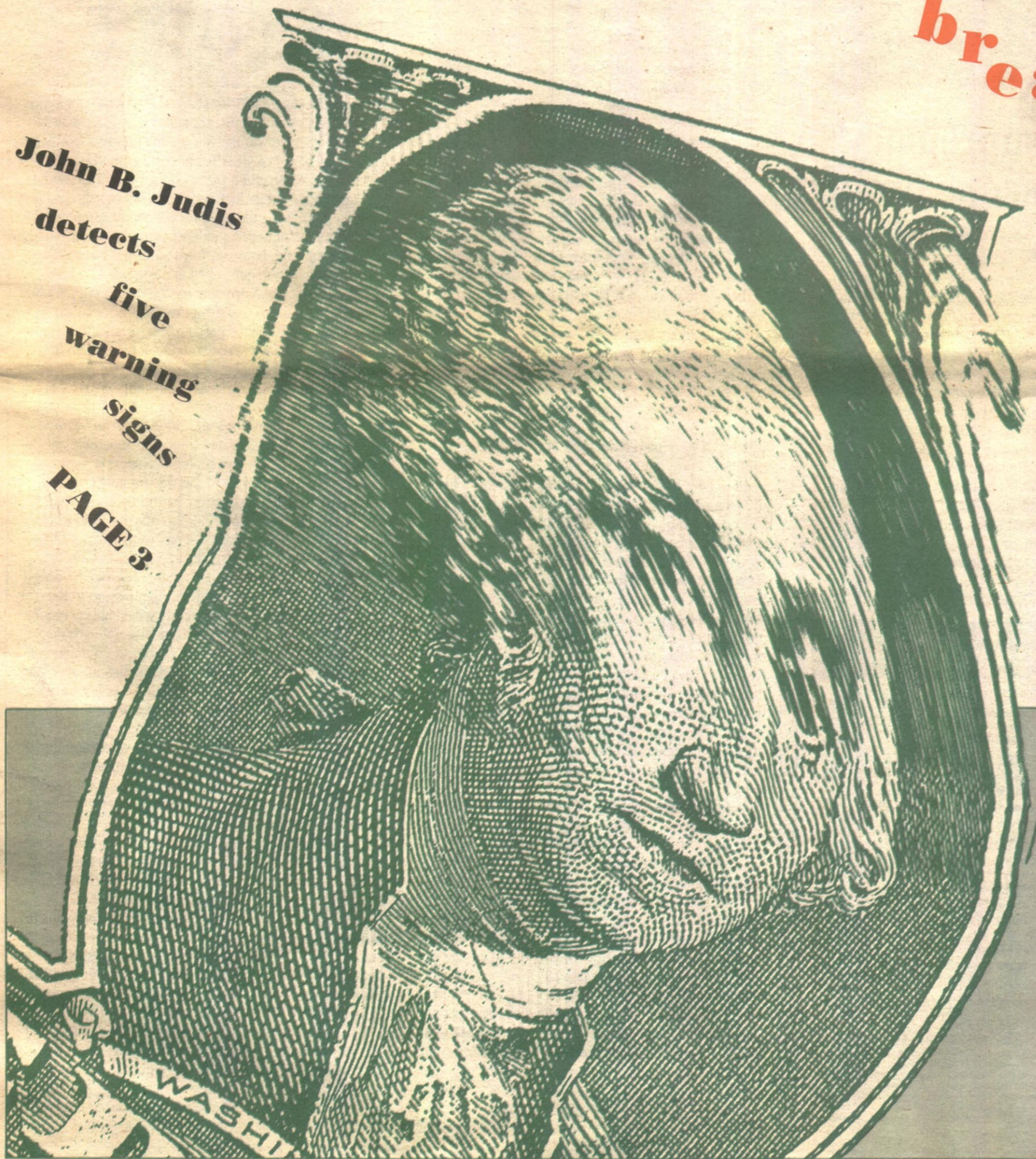
WASHINGTON

on the verge of a capital

breakdown

John B. Judis
detects
five
warning
signs

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White supremacy's global scope probed

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

The Northern Hemisphere's movement toward economic and ideological integration is provoking considerable anxiety among the victims of its imperialism.

Not only has the putative victory of the capitalist West diverted attention from the ongoing crises in the "Third World" it successfully colonized and continues to exploit, but, as Paul Hockenos and Jane Hunter point out (*In These Times*, Sept. 11), it also has won the West new allies in its dealings with those less-developed countries.

While most international attention has focused on the economic aspects of this East-West rapprochement, an increasing number of Third World analysts are framing the issue in stark racial terms. Indeed, at a conference held here last month, the process was presented as an ominous development for the continent of Africa and its descendants worldwide.

The First Annual Conference on Global White Suprem-

acy was convened by the Association of African Historians (AAH)—a Chicago-based organization of African-American scholars dedicated to the study of the African diaspora. The three-day event attracted a wide range of participants and featured a virtual who's who of Afrocentric intellectuals.

"There's not a black man, women or child living on this Earth today who has not been physically and mentally violated by the crippling effects of a deliberate assault by an all-encompassing global system of white supremacy," reads the AAH statement that opened the conference schedule. Written by AAH President Anderson Thompson, a professor of history at Northeastern University's Center for Inner-City Studies here, the statement provides a clear outline of the conference rationale.

Race or economics? "The term 'white supremacy' best describes the Western-contrived system presently at work in the world today," writes Thompson, who contends that the motive driving European imperialism is racial rather than economic. "It is a system of ideas, based on the myth of white superiority."

"The sickness of white supremacy is deeply imbedded in every sector of European society and culture," he continues. But its menace "remains elusive, despite the universal exploitation and oppression of black people everywhere in the world. This warfare aimed against our bodies and minds is the central reason why we are gathered here in Chicago on this occasion."

The conference conformed tightly to Thompson's thematic overview. Topics such as "White Supremacy in the Black Media," "White Supremacy: The Foundation of Western Civilization," "The Emergence of a New White Supremacy and the United States of Europe - 1992," "Countering White Supremacy: The Urban Situation," "The Global White Supremacist System: Philosophy, Theory and Ideology" and "African Holocaust Day" were explored in the many workshops and seminars.

The AAH was founded 20 years ago to reconstruct and reinterpret African history and culture from an African-centered perspective. Stressing the need for union and a common history among people of African descent worldwide and rigorously evaluating programs in African and black studies are also on its agenda. The mainstream academic community generally has dismissed the group as an organization of disgruntled ideologues who use history merely to grind axes.

But the current appetite for Afrocentric scholarship, coupled with a widespread acknowledgement of the distortions implicit in traditional U.S. history, has enhanced the AAH's respectability. Still, the group's racial reductionism and its ideological antipathy for all things European leave it isolated on the fringes of academia.

Resurgent nationalism: Because of the current resurgence of black nationalism, the AAH's marginal status counted as a plus in organizing the white supremacy conference. "Europeans have always attempted to obscure and ignore our true history, so it's no mystery why they don't consider the AAH a credible organization," explains Byron Bell, a doctoral economics student who presented a paper on the changing world economic order. Surprisingly, Bell was one of many students who attended the conference in a city whose nationalist community tends to attract a small, already-converted crowd.

"Young African-American students are desperately looking for some guidance, some direction and some evidence of their own intellectual worthiness," Bell said. "They certainly can't find it in mainstream academic institutions, where, by and large, their intelligence is debased and they are criminalized, like black youth everywhere. Forums like these offer them the kind of affirmation and reinforcement they need to make something of their lives without betraying their heritage, selling out and becoming 'white'."

Although organizers relied heavily on seasoned scholars to conduct the conference, they invited some uncredentialed participants as well. Among those was Harry Allen, promotional agent for the popular rap group Public Enemy. Allen stirred up some controversy earlier this year when he mailed to selected music critics works by Francis Cress-Welsing—a Washington, D.C.-based psychiatrist who theorizes that racism/white supremacy

is the psychological component of a biological deficiency.

Allen's participation illustrates another unique aspect of the conference: seldom have purveyors of popular entertainment exhibited such interest in the academic esoterica of historical research. The need to recover and recast the image of Africa's farflung children is one that is finding expression in many spheres of black culture.

War of ideas: While the confab's short-term purpose was to gather together like-minded black scholars, intellectuals and organizers to offer each other support and succor, its long-range goal is much more ambitious. "The primary objective of this conference," said Thompson, "is to develop strategies and methodologies for the ideological discernment of white supremacy while simultaneously constructing an African-centered paradigm."

"Our charge is not just to catalog victimization," he added, "but to clearly define and outline a method of

INSIDE STORY

resistance to ensure African survival. And this conference comes at a time when our very survival is at stake. It is imperative that we win the war for the minds of our people, and the world of ideas is our battleground."

Thompson emphasized the need for rigor in analyzing the Eurocentric biases that pervade Western scholarship. But he also stressed the need for economic autonomy and self-determination. An independent base is absolutely necessary, he said, because "most so-called black associations are dominated, controlled and exploited by Europeans." That lack of autonomy has tended to cripple other groups that sought redress from racist obscurantism.

While most conference participants resisted the temptation to engage in facile race-baiting—a temptation increased by the very theme of the event—there were minor episodes of such transgressions. Among the host of black-oriented books for sale by the many vendors at the conference were copies of *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, the celebrated fraud and venerable anti-Jewish tract. Although one conference speaker actually used the text as a reference, she was roundly criticized during the question-and-answer period that followed.

Steve Cokely, the former Chicago mayoral aide who was fired for making remarks offensive to Jews and Italians, proved himself an energizing speaker extremely well-versed in the art of conspiracy-mongering. He linked the Club of Rome to the Trilateral Commission to the Bildenburgher Group to the English Speaking Union, for example, and pointed out that these disparate groups were somehow connected to the European Community 1992 project and part of a worldwide unification of white supremacy. Although Cokely's rendition was not as plausible as it was entertaining, it's clear he spends many hours in the library.

End of his-story: In fact, Cokely's cast of conspiratorial white supremacists was no more bizarre than those offered by several speakers. The dire prospects for people of African descent in the wake of the 1992 emergence of the European Community (EC) was the favored subject at the conference, and many presenters offered their varied perspectives. One of the more ambitious was an attempt to find thematic links between EC '92, Trilateralism and Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" theory.

The refusal by the U.S. to devote adequate resources to the beleaguered communities of its former slaves, Western Europe's post-colonial neglect of a continent it shamelessly exploited, and the communist world's retreat into domestic *perestroika* point to a bleak future for Africans at home and in the diaspora.

The unification of Western Europe and the reshaped alliances of Eastern Europe's West "wannabes" deliver a clear message to those outside the European family—a message African-Americans received and incorporated into their folklore years ago: "If you're white, you're all right; if you're black, brother...get back."

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By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

SINCE 1973, WHEN CONGRESS DISCOVERED that the Nixon White House was impounding funds that it had appropriated to pay for social welfare programs, the U.S. government has endured repeated budget crises, culminating in brief shutdowns. None, however, has approached this year's for sheer hysteria and disunion. Previously, Democrats battled Republicans and Congress battled the White House. But during this round, disputes are raging not only among the usual adversaries but also within each party and branch of government.

George Bush deserves much of the blame. After basing his 1988 campaign on a pledge not to raise taxes, he has proved singularly unable to create a consensus around domestic policy. In addition, the Democrats, in the wake of the Gulf crisis, have backed off from attempting to make dramatic cuts in the military budget. And rising unemployment and reduced growth have raised the specter of a recession, making legislators more reluctant than ever to raise taxes and cut spending.

But the breakdown in Washington can be traced to systemic causes, many of which go back as far as 200 years. The budget crisis is merely the latest manifestation of underlying problems that have long festered yet have suddenly grown acute. Following are five of them.

Constitutional Breakdown: In civics classes, high school students are taught that the separation of powers between Congress and the executive branch prevents either body from subverting democracy. What students don't learn is that the separation of powers has disposed the federal government to repeated stalemate and breakdown. As Samuel Huntington argued in his 1969 work, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, the U.S. political system was based on a compromise between proponents of parliamentary and monarchical systems. Instead of vesting supreme power in a single body, the nation's founders split it between Congress and the presidency. (Later, of course, the Supreme Court became a co-equal.) This structure—what Huntington calls the “Tudor polity,” after the English government of the 16th century—has encouraged deadlock and stagnation as Congress and the executive have battled for supremacy.

To counteract this tendency toward deadlock, a succession of 20th-century presidents, beginning with Theodore Roosevelt, have tried to concentrate power in the White House. Under Woodrow Wilson, for instance, the executive began submitting a budget to Congress rather than accepting or vetoing what Congress had produced. Then in 1938, Franklin Roosevelt created the Office of the Presidency, whose staff is not subject to Congressional advice and consent. In 1947, Harry Truman added a new inhabitant to the Office of the Presidency, the National Security Council, from which Richard Nixon later directed his foreign policy. Nixon also transformed the old Bureau of the Budget into the much more powerful Office of Management and Budget.

But in the wake of Watergate, Congress counterattacked, establishing new budget committees and a Congressional Budget Office in 1974, and dramatically expanding Congressional staffs. It also diluted the seniority system, making Congressional committees, once the sleepy preserves of dictatorial chair-

Washington sings another chorus of mo' budget blues

men, deliberative bodies ruled by shifting coalitions of Republicans and Democrats. Congress unwittingly became even more susceptible to pressure from well-heeled lobbyists.

These changes made the Congressional process more democratic by increasing the number of voices that were heard. But it also made it more difficult for Congress to reach any significant decisions.

Some administrations have overcome this tendency toward deadlock. In Ronald Reagan's first term, he was able to bend Congress to his will. But during his second term Congress fought him to a draw, and George Bush has fared no better.

This year Bush tried to prevent a budget deadlock by bringing top White House and Congressional leaders together in summit negotiations. But the secret talks only incited envy and resentment among Congressional committee chairs and exacerbated each party's simmering factional divisions. Even if the budget had not contained harsh Medicare cuts, a spurned Congress might have defeated it.

Congress' rejection of the summit budget gave Bush an incentive to turn down its subsequent proposal, regardless of the content.

Fiscal Breakdown: From the end of World War II to 1980, Congress and the White House followed a simple neo-Keynesian strategy of using low interest rates and budget deficits to stimulate employment during downturns, and budget surpluses and high interest rates to dampen inflation during upturns. The strategy produced relatively mild recessions, followed by extended periods of economic growth.

If that strategy still held, the White House and Congress would now view the projected budget deficits with equanimity, but that strategy is obsolete because it was based on the peculiar conditions of post-World War II America.

In 1971, the U.S., faced with its first trade deficits in the 20th century, abandoned the Bretton Woods agreement, which in 1945 had made the dollar the world's currency, pegging its value to a fixed amount of gold. Without Bretton Woods, the dollar was buffeted by a stronger yen and mark at the same time that American manufacturers were being outsold by their Japanese and German rivals. America's once-contained fiscal policy became subject to the international economy's push and pull.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the way the functions of deficits changed. Defi-

cits no longer led automatically to domestic economic growth. In the '80s, the Reagan administration's tax cuts and military spending increases led to huge deficits. Like other post-war deficits, they stimulated new consumer demand. But with American products increasingly in disrepute, consumers chose to buy foreign imports. The U.S. Treasury also had to offer high interest rates in order to finance these deficits. But high interest rates discouraged domestic investment.

These changes have made it impossible to formulate fiscal policy that encourages economic growth. During the budget debate of early October, House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-GA) could therefore argue that the summit proposal to raise taxes would hasten a recession by reducing consumer demand, while Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan could equally contend that if Congress did not cut the deficit by raising taxes, he would be forced to keep raising interest rates, which would precipitate a recession. In other words, heads you lose, tails I win.

Political Breakdown: From 1932 through the late '60s, the Democrats sustained their coalition by using the federal government to enhance the prosperity of middle-class Americans, while providing relief to the unemployed, infirm and aged. But with the mushrooming of welfare programs, culminating in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, Democrats created new social programs designed solely to equalize income and economic opportunity. These programs triggered resentment among the Democrats' white middle-class supporters.

At this point, the Democratic coalition began to totter, but it took the Republican supply-side strategy of the late '70s to secure the coalition's final collapse. The Republicans countered with a strategy of their own, hoping to unite the middle and upper classes by cutting their taxes and reducing (or slowing the growth of) social spending on cities, the poor and minorities. Republicans picked off middle-class Democrats in the South and Northern suburbs, while the Democrats—particularly in presidential elections—became identified with the poor and minorities.

This strategy enabled Reagan, and later Bush, to capture the White House. But as

deficits mount, the economy slows and the middle class grows restive as its income stagnates, the Republicans face a Catch-22. Unwilling to cut military spending, yet unable to target enough discretionary social programs to make a real dent in the deficit, they must now choose between raising taxes or cutting spending on entitlement programs like Medicare that affect the middle-class constituents that they have courted over the last decade.

Bush's announcement last summer that he would raise taxes signified the end of supply-side Reaganism. It has split the Republican Party down the middle because it threatens the basis of the Republicans' majority coalition. Meanwhile, the Democrats have been able to portray the Republicans—who are unwilling to raise top rates for .6 percent of top earners—as the party of the spoiled rich.

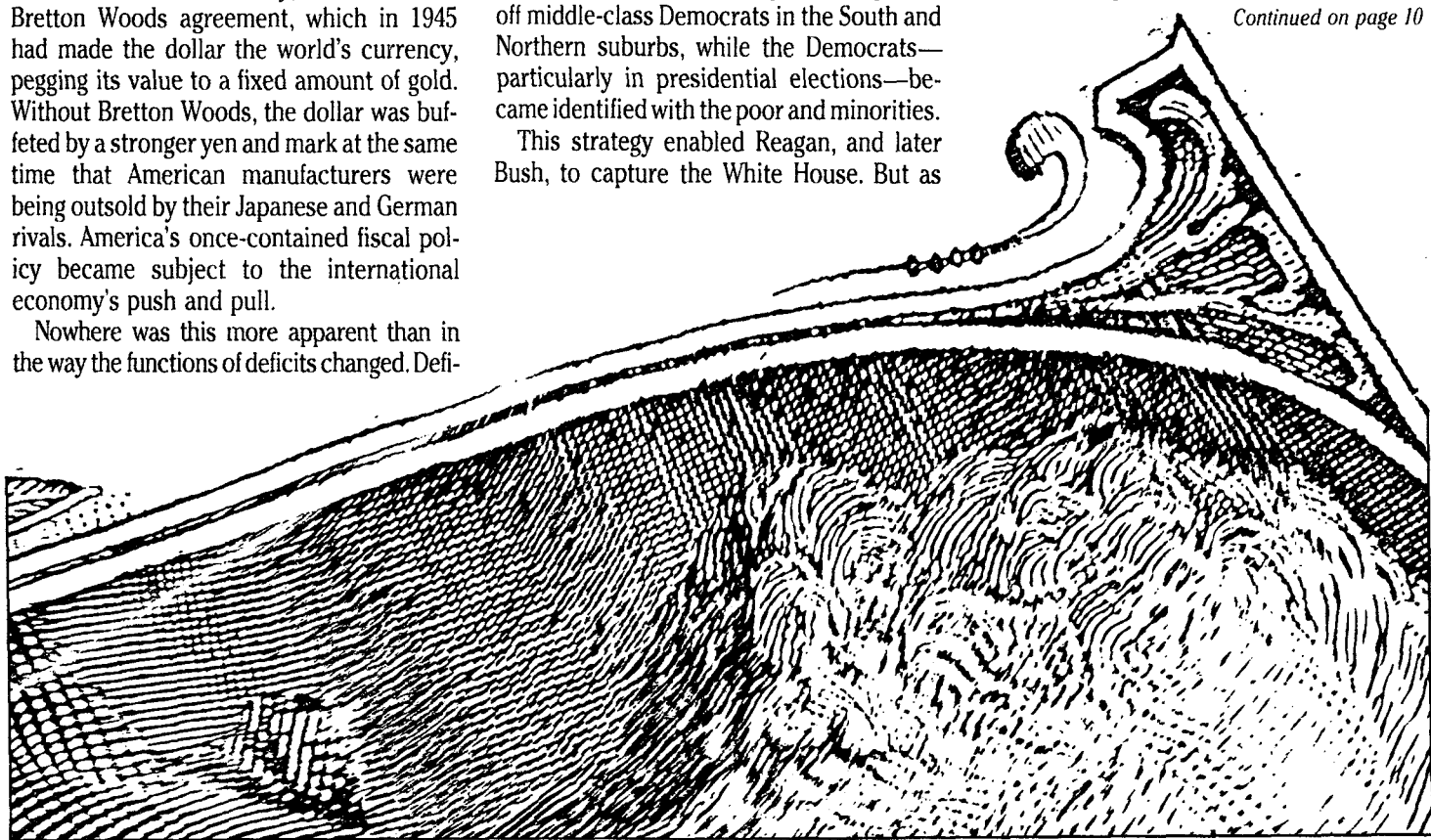
Imperial Breakdown: With the Cold War's end, the U.S. has lost its principal public justification for maintaining a large military—at least half of which was aimed at deterring Soviet aggression. For this reason, huge reductions in military spending would seem not only justified but prudent. Yet even before the U.S. dispatched troops to the Gulf region, no substantial cuts had been proposed except by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) and a few dissenters.

The military-industrial lobby remains, of course, an enormous obstacle to significant change, as do the job losses to local industry from budget cuts. Connecticut and Massachusetts have already plunged into recession due to the decline in military spending. But perhaps the greatest obstacle is the link between the military budget and America's position in the world.

From the end of World War II, the U.S. has been the world's most powerful nation. But while retaining its military superiority, it has largely squandered its economic lead over Japan and Western Europe. Drastic cuts in military spending would not only signal the end of the Cold War but also of the American Century.

Military cuts would likely accelerate the nation's economic slide—especially in the short run. No one knows how many economic arrangements that presently ben-

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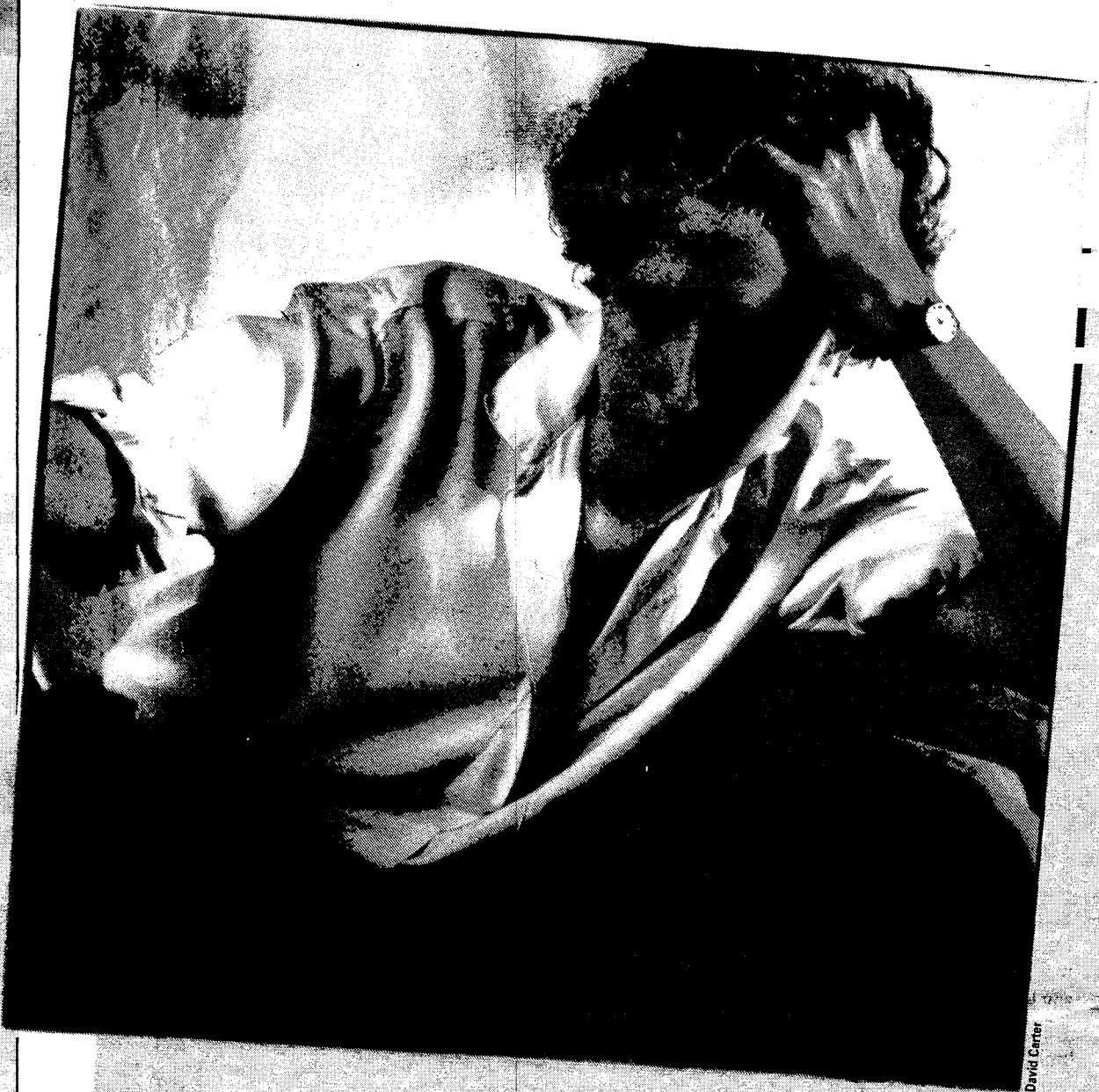


By Joel Bleifuss

Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to war we go

WPKN-FM of Bridgeport, Conn., is in the middle of its annual drive. So far, the listener-sponsored radio station has given away as premiums 150 rectal thermometers. Their attractive carrying cases read, "WPKN 89.5, on the cool side of normal." Unfortunately, nothing is cool or normal about what is going on in Washington. In the grip of war fever, the Bush administration has turned the threat of a Gulf war into a delirious shell game. Now you see it—triggers cocked. Now you don't—diplomacy underway. The result: confusion. What exactly does the U.S. intend to do? President Bush may have some idea. Let's hope he puts more thought into it than why it was necessary to send a quarter-million Americans to the Arabian peninsula. Every other day the administration offers a new justification for the deployment, but Bush has yet to present one that rings true to most Americans. He might try printing his next battle cry on a rectal thermometer.

War ready? The belief that U.S. forces are poised to go on the offensive has been reinforced by an article in the October 19 *L'Express*, a French newsweekly. Elie Marcuse and James Arazin write, in part: "In the halls of the Pentagon, it's perfectly clear there will not be a 'six-day war' against Iraq; four days will suffice. The American military commanders have all catalogued Saddam Hussein: a paper tiger. An aide to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney revealed to *L'Express* the outline of operation Night Camel. 'The deadliest attack in history,' he says, 'and the shortest.' A plan—almost too simple—in four phases. Everything begins during a moonless night in November, when the heat is more bearable for the Western combatants, and, moreover, when the enemy is afraid he will crash in the dark since his equipment does not allow him to fly at night. The first of the four acts stars the U.S. Air Force. Mission: to destroy 'Israeli-style' Iraq's offensive weapon systems in the least amount of time. 'We need to strike hard and not miss, because the success of the operation depends upon the annihilation of the Iraqi air forces in the first hours,' confides one of the planners. ... The second phase will consist of systematically annihilating the entire military-industrial infrastructure of the country under the rain of bombs, cruise missiles and entirely new armaments such as the Atacms [attack 'em, get it?] tactical missile. ... Within 24 hours the country is militarily and economically ruined. Third phase, a surgical strike to sever Kuwait from Iraq. ... Not one square meter will escape the bombardment. ... Fourth phase: the reconquest of Kuwait. ... meter by meter they will liberate Kuwait. ... But in this ideal scheme, aren't we underestimating a little too quickly the adversary? First unknown: the determination of Saddam's army. More than a half-million seasoned soldiers who, when their backs are against the wall, will no doubt fight to save their skins. America, it is known, does not like to see its boys come home in star-spangled receptacles. As the Pentagon already knows, Night Camel would cost the lives of 20,000 GIs. Second unthinkable item: will Saddam hesitate to use his frightening chemical and bacterial arsenals? ... In a sad admission of Western impotence in the face of this threat, a high-ranking British officer said in September before his departure for the Gulf that in the face of a chemical attack the only response would be nuclear. ... But the Western governments have another anguish, oil. ... Without the oil from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the entire world would find itself plunged brutally into chaos, with incalculable consequences. ... The relatively unguarded Saudi and Emirate oil installations are at the mercy of a massive kamikaze attack, like those pilots who led the Iraqi air forces to the Iranian refineries of Kharg and Sirri in 1987 and 1988. ... And even if these planes and these missiles were to be destroyed, Saddam can still reach this forest of the Saudi 'Christmas trees' thanks to teams of saboteurs who [according to Western intelligence agencies] are in place and ready to act. Is this the reason that Washington is hesitating?" The *L'Express* article does not examine the potential domestic political fallout from a U.S. first strike. In light of the Night Camel casualty estimates, one can now understand the administration's September decision to forgo full military honors for the arrival of future war dead. (See "The First Stone," October 10.) Imagine the carnage on the American side. If the average height of the dead U.S. serviceman is 5'7" and you lined the Night Camel estimate of 20,000 cadavers head to toe, the line of U.S. fatalities would stretch 20 miles. That would be enough bodies to form an "X" across the District of Columbia—and on many an anti-Bush ballot. (As for the Iraqi casualties, they, like so many zeros, aren't factored into the White House military equation.)



David Carter

Sara Paretsky: writing wrongs

By Maggie Garb

In 1979, when Sara Paretsky began the first of what is now a series of mystery novels, she was planning to turn the tables on the father of the 20th-century crime novel, Raymond Chandler. Paretsky, a feminist and self-described detective-fiction addict, was sick of Chandler's portrayal of women. "With Chandler, you've got either the virgin or the whore. When a slim sexy woman walks in, you always know she'll be the villain," says Paretsky. "It's real clear that women who are sexually active are just rotten."

Realizing she couldn't write parody and didn't want to give political sermons, Paretsky created V.I. Warshawski, a quirky P.I. who drinks fine scotch, sings Italian arias, enjoys a healthy sex life and packs a Smith & Wesson in her purse. No genteel Miss Marple, V.I.—short for Victoria Iphigenia, Vic to her friends—admits to fear but tramps Chicago's dark streets anyway.

With her character, now known to hundreds of thousands of readers in a dozen countries, Paretsky helped launch a new brand of crime fiction. In the wake of her first book, *Indemnity Only*, published in 1981, a slew of hard-boiled female sleuths, created by such writers as Linda Barnes and Liza Cody, have arrived on the scene of the crime.

Though a handful of women had been writing detective novels before Paretsky, V.I. is among the first pro-

fessional detectives strong enough to handle the roughest of thugs. She lives alone, jogs along Chicago's lakefront several times a week and, since her Chicago cop father taught her to protect herself, knows how to use a gun.

In *Killing Orders*, V.I., on the trail of a wealthy industrialist, is cornered in the dark hallway outside her apartment by two large hoods who try to throw acid in her face. V.I. breaks one man's arm, shoots the other in the leg and gets away with a minor burn and a couple bruises.

V.I. receives at least one beating in each book, but she always resists and never loses her sense of humor. In *Indemnity Only*, the fight comes early when a couple of thugs, on orders to deliver her to one of Chicago's top underworld characters, arrive at her apartment door. She splits the ribs of the first tough guy but isn't quite strong enough to fight off the second. "We rolled and I got both hands under his chin, forcing his neck back. He let go, but clobbered me on the right side of my head. It shook me all the way down my back, but I didn't give in to it.... He got another good punch in, to my shoulder, just missing the jaw, before I wiggled away. He was stronger, but I was in better shape and more agile, and I was on my feet way in advance of him, kicking him hard over his left kidney. He collapsed at that, and I was hauling back to do it again when his partner recovered himself long enough to

pick up his gun and clip me under the left ear. My kick connected at the same time and then I was falling, falling, but remembering to fall rolling, and rolling off the edge of the world.

"I wasn't out for long but long enough for them to hustle me downstairs. Good work for two partially disabled men. I guessed any neighbors alerted by the sound had turned up their TVs to drown it out."

Though Paretsky refuses to write a rape scene and deplores the gratuitous violence in much of today's crime fiction, she says that any private eye working the urban streets is bound to run into a few scrapes. "Some people have complained that V.I. is just a man in women's clothing," says Paretsky. "I don't see it that way. She just does the things I would visualize myself doing if I were an active kind of person instead of a reflective kind of person."

Paretsky is reflective and on the surface has little common with the rough-and-ready V.I. Unlike her five-foot-eight muscular creation, Paretsky is a few inches over five feet, frail and softspoken. She is recovering from a back injury that left her homebound for 15 months. "I've been in poor health for practically the past decade," she says. It's apparent on meeting her that regular exercise and outdoor work are not part of her routine.

Social crimes: But V.I.'s passion for social justice, as well as her quick wit, come straight from Paretsky. At 43, Paretsky calls herself a child of the '60s. Raised in Lawrence, Kan., where her father was a microbiology professor and her mother a librarian, she first came to Chicago in the summer of 1966 as a volunteer with a church group that was working in the impoverished South Side neighborhood of Englewood. "It was a real primer on what happens when you have people with no power, and they come up against real-estate interests, banking interests and certainly the Democratic machine, which took their votes and never gave them any kind of support," says Paretsky. "It's a very sad neighborhood. That was my introduction to Chicago. It bruises you."

Paretsky writes about people living in neighborhoods like Englewood. But, rather than street murders, her stories turn on white-collar crime. Paretsky knows a lot about that subject. After getting a Ph.D. in history and an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago, she worked for 10 years as an executive with the CNB Insurance Corp. "There's an incredible amount of violence in people's lives that we tend not to hold the perpetrators responsible for," she says. "That's what I write about. When I show a murder happen, I say I know that an industrialist is most likely not going to kill anybody to protect his business; on the other hand, I think a lot of people have died because somebody wants to protect his ass."

Her villains range from gang bangers to middle management to CEOs. The crimes are spawned by political and corporate corruption. Paretsky spares no institutions. In *Killing Orders*, a theft and later a murder are somehow connected to a secret society within the Catholic Church. In *Indemnity Only*, she tars a labor union, an insurance firm and a bank.

Along with boosting the role of women in crime fiction, Paretsky writes against other stereotypes. Physicians and other professionals in her books often are black, Hispanic or gay. The criminals are generally white and male. In *Blood Shot*, one of the smartest and most physically capable characters is a 72-year-old woman. Paretsky says she first described that character in "typical granny fashion." But realizing she had created a cliché, she started again. "I began to totally rethink that character," says Paretsky. "And I rewrote about 70 pages of the book. I just didn't want her to be another weak old woman. She was stronger than that, and I knew it. It was too easy to follow a cliché that led nowhere."

The blatant social commentary in Paretsky's books hasn't lost her any readers. V.I. Warshawski mysteries are translated into half a dozen languages, and her two most recent—*Blood Shot* and

Burn Marks—reached the *New York Times* best-seller list. V.I. may even come to the screen in the form of Kathleen Turner, who is contracted with Disney-Hollywood Productions to make a V.I. Warshawski movie.

Paretsky has received a shelf full of awards, including the British Crime Writers Association's Silver Dagger Award, which has been bestowed on few Americans. She also was honored as one of *Ms.* magazine's women of the year in 1988.

Political action: Despite the critical acclaim, what pleases Paretsky most is the effect her books have on women readers. "What my books seem to do for women is to give them a sense of empowerment in their lives. I don't write with this goal in mind, but I hear from women all over the world who tell me that reading about V.I. helps them through the bad times. They tell me they read about V.I. and then feel like they can go back to the mat and carry on. It moves me unbelievably. Insofar as something's political—the idea that you can act, that you're not a victim, that you can take charge of your life—then I suppose my books are having a political effect on people."

Along with writing, Paretsky has spent two decades working in the women's movement. She is a board member for the National Abortion Rights Action League of Illinois and generously supports other feminist efforts, including contributing a non-mystery short story to a women's fiction anthology to be published next year by City Stoop Press of Chicago.

Paretsky is particularly incensed by the images of women in crime novels. "If you look at murder in this country, what you are really looking at is black or Hispanic young men shooting or being shot," she says. "That's maybe 70 percent of the crimes. So, two things. First there's an awful lot of crime fiction being written today about the maiming and torturing of women. When you ask guys why they are doing this, they say it's reality. Well, you know that's not reality. The reality is the boring street murders. The second thing is I think these street murders are terrible tragedies, but I don't have anything to say about them. It's almost beyond my ability to think about what goes on in Chicago—this cycle of crime and poverty."

She continues, "I was on a committee in 1986 to vote on the best private-eye novel published in 1985. Only one of the books that we were sent did not feature extremely graphic sadism toward women and children. I think that's shocking."

Sisterhood: To counter such negative female roles and to bolster women crime writers, Paretsky helped found Sisters in Crime, an international network of about 600 female mystery writers and readers. The organization is currently assisting a study of images of women in detective novels conducted by the University of New Hampshire's Center for the Study of Family Violence.

Paretsky lives in a rambling Victorian house in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood with her husband, S. Courtenay Wright, a physics professor, and her golden retriever Cardhou. She has always written fiction, even as a child, penning stories and plays with her brothers. In her early 20s, she got the idea of writing about a female private eye. V.I. was conceived 10 years later when Paretsky was marketing insurance; one of V.I.'s strongest qualities came to Paretsky in the middle of a board meeting.

"I was sitting in this meeting with my boss, and you know how big corporations work—when you're in middle management, you're kind of the baloney in the sandwich. My boss was saying something asinine, and I was sitting there nodding and saying, 'Great idea, go for it.' And in my head, I was thinking, 'What a stupid jackass.' That's when V.I. came to me. You know those thought bubbles that hang over cartoon characters. She's the one who gets to say what's in the bubble." □

Maggie Garb is a Chicago-based freelance journalist.

Strategic mirage: Eric Mankin, editor of the *L.A. Reader* and a self-described war buff, believes the above-mentioned U.S. scenario is overly optimistic. He says the Night Camel estimate of 20,000 American dead "seems quite reasonable, and it may be a lot more than that and take a lot longer." According to Mankin, we should take note of the military maxim "often wrong but never in doubt." Mankin explains: "The main worry is that we will have some generals start to believe their rhetoric. Ever since the military started to fly, they've maintained that everything else is obsolete. Planes have always been oversold. There may be some awareness of that in military circles, but it hasn't sunk in. And in the Gulf, the whole American strategy depends on air power." Mankin criticizes the commonly held idea that the U.S. won't spend years fighting this war because, unlike Vietnam, it isn't being fought in a jungle. "It's fairly well known that there is a desert-jungle trade-off. In the desert, armies can't hide like they can in the jungle, but the fact is that a desert has an uninterrupted horizon and planes can't do their favorite trick, which is to hug terrain, pop over hilltops and surprise the enemy. As a result, in a desert even quite primitive anti-aircraft weapons can be surprisingly effective. In World War II the Russian army's tactic of troops firing their guns in unison at oncoming planes had some success. Even the *New York Times* admits that Iraq's artillery—and artillery statistically kills the most people in modern battles—is quite good, so if our planes can't take out all of Iraq's artillery at once, you have a mess." Mankin goes on to say that a U.S. surprise attack in the middle of the night could be stymied by the "high-tech invention" Germany used so effectively in World War II—the searchlight. "There is a lot of potential for problems," he continues. "There is nothing but jokers in the deck. Everything can so easily spin out of control."

Night flight: Speaking of spinning out of control, there has been a flurry of press reports about how U.S. troops are training for a night war. "We expect to fight at night," Maj. Lee Flake of the 101st Airborne Division told the *Chicago Tribune's* David Evans. "We're practicing a mobile defense, where we keep pounding away as we fall back." In the event of war, the 101st Division has at its disposal 200 helicopters for moving troops and artillery and for shooting missiles at enemy tanks. But the U.S. has been having a few problems keeping its air fleet airborne. For one thing, it is difficult to fly close to the ground over a flat desert—pilots are unable to gauge their horizon, and since they often can't tell if they are flying up or down, it is easy to miscalculate. Flying close to the desert floor is especially tricky at night, even with the new night-vision goggles. These Darth Vader-like contraptions are standard issue in Task Force 160, the Army's special-forces aviation unit. On October 12, the *New York Times's* Michael Gordon reported that, in the wake of the 15 helicopter accidents that have taken place since the U.S. moved into the Gulf, the Army and Air Force have restricted low-level helicopter flights at night. Gordon writes, "A particular focus of concern has been the performance of night-vision goggles in helicopter operations. The Pentagon says it is satisfied with the performance of the goggles, even though the Army has stipulated that all but its most proficient helicopter pilots must fly at least 150 feet off the ground at night." The problems with the goggles don't come as a surprise to the Defense Department. According to the fashion magazine *Details*, 30 members of the 160th Task Force died in air crashes during product development of the night-vision system. An Air Force colonel commented, "Any time you start something new you have a learning curve. I think the task force was part of that learning curve."

Stalemate? So where on the learning curve is the Bush administration? So far, the only lesson learned is that a play-as-you-go foreign policy can lead to a no-win situation. A U.S. offensive against Iraq would be political suicide for Bush and his Republican allies. Ninety percent of Americans oppose a U.S. offensive in the Gulf. Cheney seems to have recognized this when he said last week that months may pass before the embargo succeeds. When reporters asked him if the administration decided to forgo an attack and wait it out because it feared the political fallout of a bloodbath, he replied, "The assumption has to be that this would be a costly proposition." Yet the longer this crisis drags on, the more Americans will begin to demand a convincing reason why the U.S. has billeted a quarter-million-member army in the Gulf. And when people realize that the reasons proffered are hollow, the president's approval rating will plummet even further. Of course, Bush's only way out is to pull the trigger. And therein lies the Catch-22: the cost of a U.S. victory—even in the Pentagon's best-case scenario—would carry a price the administration couldn't bear. Meanwhile, as the U.S. economy slips into recession, one could enjoy Bush and company's impending downfall if not for the fact that catastrophe is the daughter of desperation.

Alive, socialist and well?

As "socialism" crumbles throughout Eastern Europe, the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) is celebrating its 100th anniversary—with vigor. "Real socialism hasn't failed," says the centennial issue of *the People*, the SLP's biweekly paper. "It has not yet been tried." The original socialist party in the U.S., the SLP insists that American socialists and their principles are *not* in turmoil, as press and politicians would have it. It is ironic, says *the People's* editor Richard Whitney, that "those who patterned their theory and practice on the models of socialism that are now crumbling in other nations" continue to ignore the SLP—"the one organization whose theory, practice and conception of socialism are derived from distinctly American conditions and traditions"—the same organization that has not changed in 100 years.

Can't keep an ex-CIA man down

Holding the hand of the U.S. State Department, the government of Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro last month revoked the honorary passport of renowned CIA-ex Philip Agee. One of the most "controversial Americans" of the past two decades, Agee's U.S. passport was revoked in 1979 after his books exposing the covert operations of the CIA were deemed a threat to national security. Nicaragua's then-Sandinista government gave Agee a passport in 1980, enabling him to continue his worldwide CIA-exposure travels. Not coincidentally, the passport was nullified Sept. 22, on the eve of Agee's 20-city U.S. speaking tour.

Fighting the Jolly corporate Giant

No one in Watsonville, Calif., home to frozen-veggie goliath the "Jolly Green Giant," is chanting "Ho, Ho, Ho." In January, almost 400 frozen-food workers at the Pillsbury/Green Giant plant—most of them Latina—will lose their jobs, reports Mike Kostyal. Most of the jobs will be exported to Irapuato, Mexico, where Green Giant plans to expand its frozen broccoli and cauliflower production and where workers will be paid less than \$4 a day. The Watsonville workers, represented by Teamsters Local 912, are calling for a week-long international protest October 20-27 against parent company Grand Metropolitan PLC of London, which also controls Burger King restaurants, Haagen-Dazs ice cream, Alpo and Blue Mountain dog foods, Pearle eye-care centers and several brand-name liquors and wines, including Smirnoff, J & B and Almaden.

Rally round the incinerator

From atop three of the worst toxic dumps in the nation, the residents of Jacksonville, Ark., are asking for help. Hercules and Vertac, the two Jacksonville-based chemical companies that produced 25 percent of the Agent Orange used in Vietnam, also produced 28,500 barrels of toxic waste, many of them containing dioxin—the most lethal chemical ever made (see *In These Times*, March 9, 16 and 23, 1988). Now the Environmental "Protection" Agency (EPA) wants to incinerate the waste—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for one year—with admittedly inadequate toxic burn standards. The National Toxic Campaign is calling for a mass demonstration in Jacksonville October 27. If the EPA wins, Jacksonville will be only one of 25 incinerator sites nationwide. For more information, call (617) 232-0327.

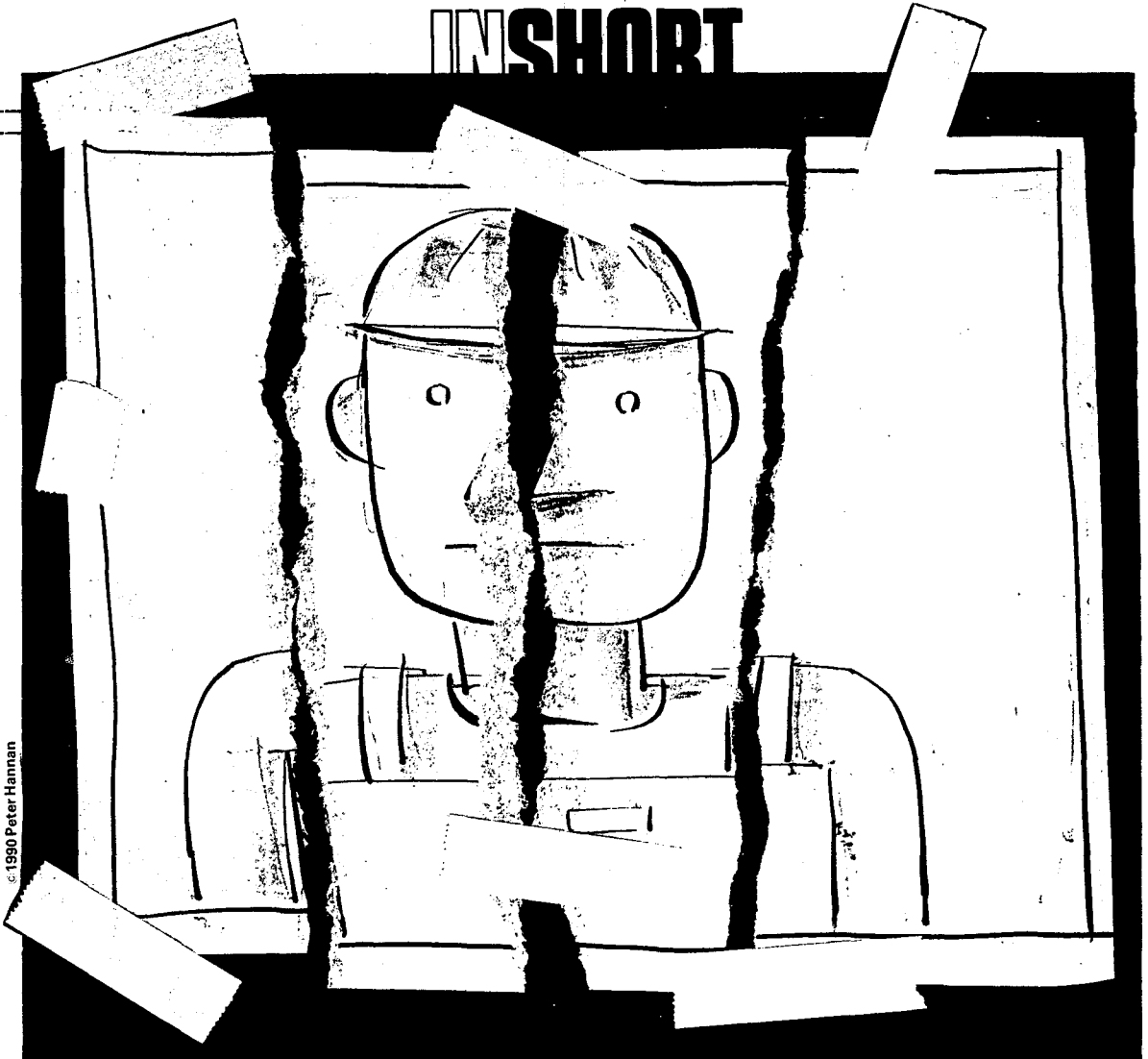
Never again

Proponents of peace in the Middle East are hitting the air waves with a 30-second television spot featuring Ron Kovic, Vietnam vet of *Born on the Fourth of July* fame. Produced by the Tempe, Ariz.-based Operation Real Security, the advertisement—titled "Never Again"—openly opposes the U.S. troop build-up in the Persian Gulf and calls for a negotiated settlement as the only acceptable way to resolve the conflict.

That's not entertainment

The home life of Adolf Hitler, his lover Eva Braun and "their Jewish neighbors" will provide a most unlikely backdrop for the 1991 British television series *Heil Honey, I'm Home*. Based on the situation comedy format of classics such as *I Love Lucy*, the show is set in Hollywood in the '60s—a far reach from Berlin in the '30s. While a pilot episode drew criticism for its overly sympathetic portrayal of the late dictator, John Gau, director of programs at British Satellite Broadcasting, says Hitler "will clearly come off the loser in the [series'] domestic disputes." American Jewish writer Paul Wayne, who will co-write the series with Briton Geoff Atkinson, adds, "I really think we've found a way to make it work, being outrageous without being offensive."

INSHORT



Project Solidarity takes over where national union fails

After a decade of retreat in the face of an aggressive, anti-union assault by International Paper Corporation (IP), a coalition of United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) locals are banding together to fight back.

This unprecedented cooperative effort by more than 30 UPIU locals is called Project Solidarity. The group's immediate goal is to revive the corporate campaign against their employer, the largest paper company in the world.

"Project Solidarity is a grass-roots effort," says Russ Schultz of UPIU Local 20 in Kaukauna, Wis. "If we want to build our union back up to be effective for us, it's got to be grass roots."

The project is part of an emerging union local response to the failure of the AFL-CIO and many of its affiliated national unions to effectively respond to concessions and losses workers suffered during the last decade.

"For the past few years, we have been taking concessions," says Jerry Geter of UPIU Local 602 in Natchez, Miss. "And we felt we have given up as much as we can stand. We knew if we tried to fight this company by ourselves, we didn't stand a chance."

Designed to bring the 60-plus UPIU union locals that have contracts with IP into a common bargaining pool, the coalition was fueled by new demands from IP for further wage cuts and increased worker contributions to health-care plans. Because the locals currently have different contract expiration dates, each bargains with IP separ-

ately. This has allowed the paper giant to divide and conquer the unions through job blackmail threats and simple coercion.

IP has reacted quickly and predictably to the creation of Project Solidarity. In August, IP head John Georges requested an urgent meeting with UPIU President Wayne Glenn and several vice presidents. IP's strategy was to undermine the new initiative by playing on the "special personal relationships" between management and the union's international executive board that inherently excluded input from local union leadership.

"We were a little worried," says Ed Garvey, a labor lawyer and former head of the National Football League Players Association, whose Labor Strategies Group from Madison, Wis., was hired to coordinate the Project Solidarity effort. "The one thing IP could do to effectively derail Project Solidarity was to make some contract concessions without addressing the real power imbalance in the union-company relationship."

The September 14 meeting requested by IP proved to be just another attempt by the anti-union conglomerate to create the appearance of bargaining in good faith. International Paper has dictated contract terms for the last decade under such a guise. With no effective union ability to strike, collective bargaining with IP has been dominated by management.

Project Solidarity is a response to this failure of the collective-bargaining process, one that offers a glimpse of what the future may hold for a labor movement denied protection by labor laws already on the books.

Coalition locals harass IP's management through an "in-plant" strategy that directs union members to

do exactly what they are told and nothing more, thereby denying the often inept plant management the benefit of workers' experience. This strategy has cut production as much as 20 percent in some IP plants.

A "social audit" videotape that presents IP as an outlaw corporation that steals from its workers, the community and the environment is planned. This videotape will be broadly distributed as the keystone of an expanded corporate campaign.

Project Solidarity hopes to gain companywide bargaining with a common contract expiration date for locals through an unusual tactic permitted by the UPIU constitution. As each local's contract expires, bargaining continues until IP implements its final contract offer. Strike action is not part of the union plan. Instead, the local takes a contract ratification vote, seals the ballots uncounted in boxes and ships them to UPIU headquarters in Nashville. This process in effect ends negotiations without ratification of the contract, allowing union members to continue working in a kind of contractual limbo.

At some point before Dec. 31, 1991, Glenn will open all the sealed boxes at once, revealing what most leaders believe will be a rejection of IP's contracts.

The pool continues to expand. By mid-October, 12 more locals had joined Project Solidarity, with five more voting next month.

The locals have gone out of their way to emphasize that Project Solidarity is not aimed at the international's current leadership. "We're not against the international," said John Anthony of Texarkana, Texas. "It's going to take cooperation with the international if this is going to work. We are targeting IP and IP alone."

—Chris Bedford

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

THE CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR RAILS against his opponent, linking him to 14 years of "tax and spend" policies. He pledges to roll back the state's temporary income-tax increase yet promises he can "cut the fat" in government and fire enough state employees to keep funding education. Hard-pressed local governments should cut spending rather than rely on state assistance or increased property taxes, he insists. His message, according to a major party leader, is "clear and concise: don't look to taxes to solve every problem in this state."

Standard Republicanism? Yes, but this year it's coming from a Democrat, Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan, who wants to fill the chair being vacated by moderate Republican James Thompson, the state's longest-tenured governor. Hartigan's one-note campaign focuses on opposition to continuing a temporary, two-year, \$700-million-a-year income-tax increase that has been parceled out pretty evenly between aid to schools and to cities. Overall, Hartigan has tried to mobilize anti-tax, anti-government and anti-Thompson "time for a change" sentiments. Republican candidate James Edgar, secretary of state since 1981, has by contrast insisted that the income-tax increase must be made permanent to fund education adequately.

To the dismay of the anti-abortion movement, Edgar has long been pro-choice. Until he decided to run for governor, Democrat Hartigan had been anti-abortion. Then last fall he hurriedly negotiated a settlement in *Ragsdale vs. Turnock*—a case he initiated—which greatly circumscribed abortion clinics and would have given the U.S. Supreme Court an opportunity to further restrict abortion rights.

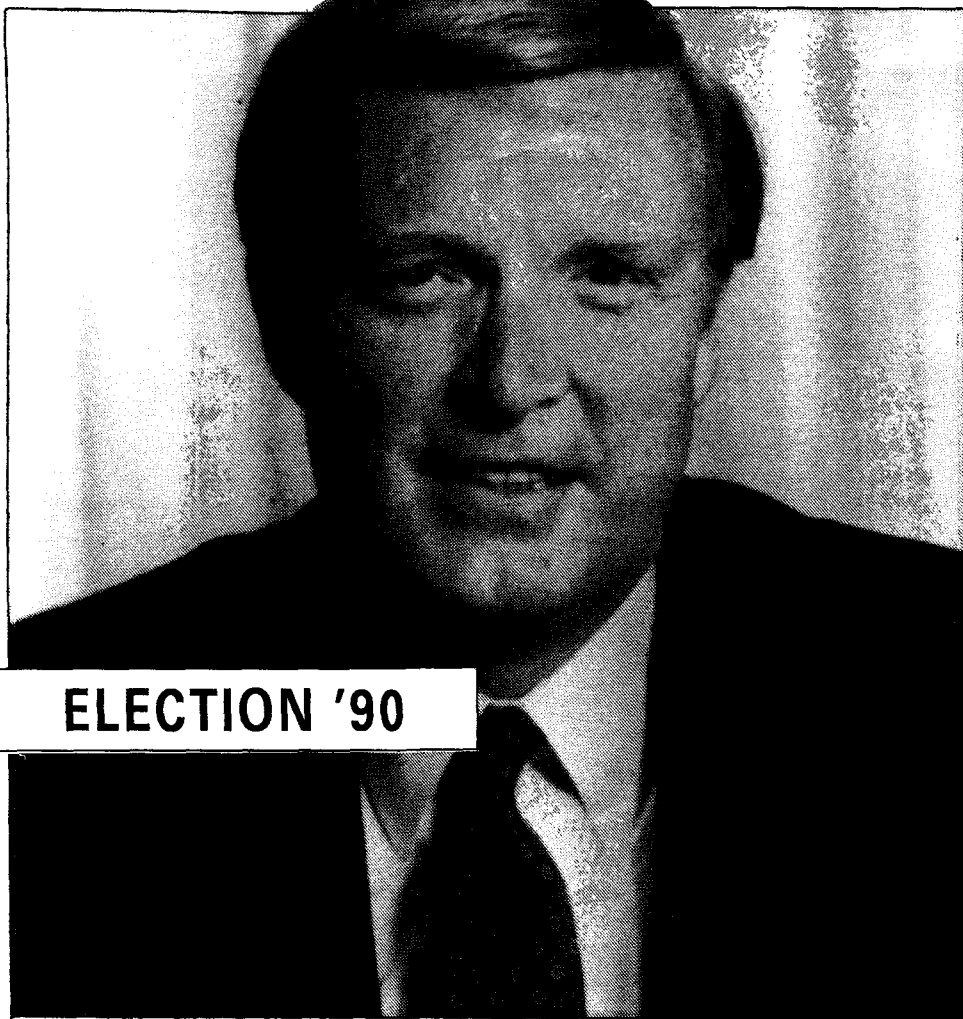
The switch in traditional politics, with Hartigan attempting a right-end tax run around his moderate Republican opponent, has contributed to the already substantial disarray among parties and constituencies. Edgar has to contend with disgruntlement on his right, Hartigan with discontent among blacks and liberals—as well as the high level of distrust voters feel, seeing him as a man "of no principles and few scruples," in the words of leftist political strategist Don Rose, an Edgar adviser.

Classic "special interest" politics also come into play. For example, concrete suppliers hack Hartigan because politically generous asphalt contractors have monopolized the state's roadwork patronage under Thompson. And liquor distributors and tavern owners are fighting Edgar because he won tougher drunk-driving laws (although fighting drunk driving emerges in polls as a very strong women's issue).

Political hopscotch: Once marginally Republican, Illinois over the past 30 years has become somewhat Democratic in state politics, although still narrowly Republican in presidential elections. Downstate rural and small-town Republicanism has faded as the number of farmers has shrunk and as medium-sized manufacturing towns and rural areas have been hard hit economically. Democrats with a populist bent, led by U.S. Rep. Lane Evans, have carved out new turf in traditional Republican areas.

The booming suburbs surrounding Chicago have become the GOP's stronghold, but even there Democratic votes have increased slightly. Although these suburbs support some far-right politicians—including Republican Reps. Henry Hyde and Philip

Illinois governor's race offers voters rotten choice



ELECTION '90

Standard Republicanism from Democrat and Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan.

Crane—many are social moderates and economic conservatives. Within Chicago, traditional white ethnic Democrats, often motivated by racial fears, have favored conservative local Democrats and Republican presidential candidates. Blacks, about 44 percent of Chicago's population, have felt increasingly angry with local Democratic leaders—except during a brief hiatus of exhilaration when the late Mayor Harold Washington ran city hall.

Thompson succeeded politically in part because he kept the Republican right rumblings under control and cultivated support among traditional Democratic constituencies, especially unions. Thompson came in as a reformer and then became a master of patronage politics, doling out tax breaks for splashy projects but developing no long-term strategy of financial support for education or economic development. In his last two elections, he assured voters the state was fiscally sound and then sprang tax hikes immediately after he was elected.

Still, Illinois state taxes remain below the national average, and the state's share of education funding has dropped. With federal aid to states and cities declining, the burden on local government has gone up. Property taxes, which are above the national average, have jumped in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Edgar hopes to convince voters that abandoning the income-tax increase will force up the property taxes that his campaign believes are the focus of anti-tax feelings. He has campaigned to cap property taxes and, like Hartigan, favors requiring a 60 percent legislative majority to pass new state taxes. Although Edgar's tax position is more responsible than Hartigan's—both socially and fiscally—neither candidate has campaigned with a strong positive vision of what

government could do in a state where social services and education have been neglected and major sectors of the economy have been battered. As one liberal Republican leader said, "Neither Hartigan nor Edgar has any sense of why he is running for governor."

Down to the wire: Polls show Hartigan pulling close to Edgar, with more than one-fourth undecided. Many voters like Hartigan's anti-tax message but distrust the messenger (although a *Chicago Tribune* poll showed two-thirds of Democrats favoring the income-tax extension). Hartigan is a product of the Chicago machine and has often vacillated and shunned important political fights in the past. "I've never found

him once to be courageous or forthright on anything," a leader of a prominent citizens' lobby said. In 1987, he backed a third-party challenge to incumbent Washington, the Democratic mayoral nominee. That, along with his machine ties and a message undercutting cities and schools, will help to alienate many black voters he is taking for granted.

Democrats had worried that the Harold Washington Party, a third party launched in last year's mayoral race, would siphon off black votes. But with judges voting along partisan lines, the party has now been thrown off the ballot. Many blacks blame the Democrats for the defeat, and along with general disillusionment and the support of several prominent black movement leaders for Edgar, low black support may be Hartigan's demise.

Not much choice: Liberals seem torn, rejecting Hartigan's message and distrusting the man but favoring Democrats in general. Many are convinced he's lying and will actually support the income tax if elected. Others see him as marginally better than his opponent for favoring such proposals as mandatory unpaid family leave (which Edgar opposes). Still others have decided to hold their noses and vote for him in order to guarantee the Democrats a favorable remap of districts after the final 1990 census results are released (although blacks have reason from his past record on remaps not to trust him). Liberal Democratic mainstays such as AFSCME (the public employee union) and the National Organization for Women have endorsed nobody.

Many anti-abortion conservatives are likely to sit out the race, but—in a parallel to Hartigan's own problems on the left—conservative Republicans are persuaded that next year's remap will be a disaster with a Democratic governor and an almost certain Democratic legislature. Likewise, without a strong party organization, Republicans are even more dependent on state patronage to keep their party together.

A Hartigan victory would give comfort both nationally and locally to Democrats who want a turn to the right. But it would lead either to further fragmentation of the Democratic base or to a flip-flop that will increase distrust of already-cynical voters. In an era marked by political party incoherence, Illinois politicians are fighting for top honors. □

It's liberalism vs. conservatism in race for Senate

First-term Democratic Sen. Paul Simon seems headed toward a solid re-election victory over Republican Rep. Lynn Martin in what is—with the exception of the abortion issue—a traditional showdown between Democratic liberalism and GOP conservatism.

Simon portrays himself as a defender of Social Security, education, the environment, health care and civil rights, attacking Martin as someone who has opposed spending and other initiatives in all those areas. He has advocated cutting the military budget by half and increasing taxes on the rich.

Martin, who earned her reputation as a moderate largely for her support of abortion choice and the Equal Rights Amendment, attacks Simon as anti-defense, pro-tax and pro-spending. But so far the message has not cut deeply into Simon's support—partly because of a nasty, shrill edge she brings to her attacks.

The main damage to the incumbent

comes from revelations—from press reports and Martin's campaign—that Simon has frequently intervened in questionable ways on behalf of big contributors, including savings and loan executives. Simon owes his support among conservatives as much to his squeaky-clean image as to his small-town origin, bow-tied squareness and support of the balanced-budget amendment. But with fundraising for two Senate races (this year he's raising \$7.2 million to Martin's \$4.4 million) and a failed presidential bid, Simon has also been tainted by the dominant money politics that have so grievously distorted the Democratic Party, despite his continued old-fashioned, cautiously constructed liberalism.

But anyone who wants to find strong ideological contrasts in Illinois politics can look within the Democrats—Hartigan compared with Simon—as much as between parties.

—D.M.

In Connecticut, immigrants battle for soul of white ethnic America

By Paul Bass

NEW HAVEN, CONN.

WHEN THE COLUMBUS DAY PARADE pulled into the Italian-American Wooster Square neighborhood October 7, it entered a key battleground between the national Democratic and Republican parties over the soul of white ethnic America.

Ten years ago Ronald Reagan came here during his presidential campaign to make his successful, symbolic pitch to working-class white ethnics—stalwarts of the New Deal coalition that would help Reagan shift the balance of power in Washington by responding to his culturally conservative appeal.

Wooster Square is the home turf of Democratic congressional candidate Rosa DeLauro, the daughter of two Italian immigrants—Democratic ward politicians who for decades helped tend the cradle of New Haven's once-awesome party machine. Today DeLauro herself is running for office as an unabashed liberal, seeking to convince families like her childhood neighbors that Democrats, not Republicans, stand for "family values."

Tom Scott, a conservative Republican running against DeLauro on his own "family values" platform, came to the Columbus Day parade carrying fliers—complete with Col-

umbus' picture—that directly questioned DeLauro's native roots. "Rosa DeLauro may have started out as one of us," the flier read, "but living down in Washington, she's become one of them." According to the flier, "them" includes "left-wing politicians" such as Michael Dukakis, Walter Mondale and Barney Frank (D-MA), an openly gay member of Congress.

Us against them: Appealing to embittered working- and middle-class white ethnics facing hard economic times has enabled conservatives in some parts of the country to either decimate the Democratic Party's trad-

ELECTION '90

itional base or shift it to a more Republican-oriented leadership. Because DeLauro and Scott propound brazen liberal and conservative views, because theirs is one of the few congressional contests for an open seat, and because the race is close, the campaign has become a key battleground in the historic tussle over which party can convince most Americans that it represents traditional values.

The outcome could determine the greatest shift of power since the New Deal. This is a campaign focused on working- and middle-class families who have seen their quality of



New Haven congressional candidate and unabashed liberal Rosa DeLauro.

life deteriorate in the past decade but don't know which party to blame: the Republicans, who control the White House, or the Demo-

crats, who rule Congress—wealthy individuals and corporations receiving open-ended tax advantages in the Reagan years, or "special interests" (unions, women, racial minorities, gays) whose money sustains a Democratic congressional majority.

Scott says the traditional American family is threatened by higher taxes slated for social programs, by flag-burners and by government in general. DeLauro says the same family is threatened by a lack of affordable health care and job security. Scott takes "the pledge" on never raising taxes. DeLauro says people have "already been through 'read my lips,'" and she favors increased taxes on the wealthy and a transfer of military spending to day-care and health-care funding. Scott calls for maintaining the excessive military spending that nurtures much of Connecticut's economy rather than focusing on a peace dividend to retrain workers—a major proposal of DeLauro's.

Scott is ardently anti-abortion; DeLauro ardently pro-choice. Scott opposes gay civil-rights legislation; DeLauro supports it. Scott pushes the death penalty as a major deterrent to crime; DeLauro, while favoring the death penalty for loosely defined "drug kingpins," pushes gun control, which Scott opposes.

Elected at 22 as the youngest-ever state senator, Scott spent five terms in Hartford as an outspoken outsider even among Republicans. A celebratory article in a recent issue of *Human Events*, a far-right-wing journal both Reagan and Scott have cited as a political influence, labeled him "one of the two most conservative state senators in Hartford," in a state Republican Party traditionally dominated by its liberal wing.

As a top Washington aide to U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) during the Reagan years, DeLauro helped fashion day-care legislation that represented the Democratic Party's first attempt to claim family issues as part of their own more liberal platform. After that, DeLauro served as executive director of a political action committee called EMILY's List,

Continued on page 10

Dusting off the comptroller's powers in a new political age

You have to wonder why a person like Bill Curry would want an anonymous job like Connecticut state comptroller.

Curry's been around the world—monitoring Central American elections, checking in with South Korea's dissident movements. He used to run the national Freeze Voter organization. As a high-profile state senator, he championed pioneering open-government, environmental, conflict-of-interest and consumer-protection legislation.

Now he seeks a job few people have ever heard of, whose occupants have never made waves or exploited any of the office's broad statutory budget-oversight powers. He wants a position that has traditionally served to balance ethnic and geographic tickets, not to carry out a grass-roots reformer's vision of government.

For the first time in state history, Curry defeated an incumbent for the Democratic nomination. Now he faces a Republican opponent with millions of dollars to spend, in a year when most voters will pull a Republican or an independent third-party lever for the governor's spot.

"There's a whole new politics being born in this country," says Curry. "From Robert Kennedy to Ralph Nader, there were a lot of models for progressives in the Democratic Party—people whose skepticism of aggravated power in all its forms was in a line back to Thomas Jefferson. We conceded so many of these issues of management, of decentralization, of empowerment.... In all my life the Democratic Party has been the party of conscience—in civil rights, in arms control. It has often needed prodding, but it has been the vehicle.

"Making bureaucracy more efficient is a progressive issue. How to make the bureaucracy more responsive, more human, is to the end of the 20th century what the industrial revolution was to the early part of the century. We have to demonstrate to people that we understand accountability."

Curry proposes dusting off the comptroller's powers to investigate all government departments. He says he's prepared to use the power to stop payment on any government check if he considers a bill inappropriate, illegal or contrary to its legislated purpose. He vows to clean up the state's corrupt relationship with private contractors.

He also plans to broaden the office to become a "safe haven" for government whistleblowers. He promises to use the comptroller's seat on state banking and bonding commissions to push for broader representation in financial institutions and a greater commitment to environmental protection and job creation in government borrowing packages.

But first he must get elected. His opponent, wealthy real-estate developer Joel Schiavone, has boosted his statewide name recognition through extensive billboard advertising and mass mailings. Schiavone has raised more money than any candidate in state history and has poured more than \$1 million of his own money into his campaign. Curry defeated his Democratic convention opponent with less money than Schiavone has spent on office furniture.

Like Curry, Schiavone promises to revive the job's powers to carry out a political vision—but his is a conservative vision that calls for removing much govern-

ment social-service funding. Leading a businessmen's tour to South Africa, which included a visit to Sun City and denunciations of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the African National Congress, Schiavone sparked anti-apartheid demonstrations against his business. He has also provoked outrage by suggesting that New Haven's homeless be shipped to a nearby island.

But Schiavone hasn't been as outspoken about the race, ducking Curry's calls for debates and holding no press conferences. Curry used his opponent's reticence to get his own name on the map by publicly offering \$25 to the first person who reports sighting Schiavone in public. "The Donald Trump of the governor's race has become the Howard Hughes of the comptroller's race," quips Curry, an intense conversationalist deft in quotable sound bites and extensive political discourse.

To combat the odds against him, Curry has convinced both the Connecticut Citizen Action Group and the Sierra Club to make their first endorsements ever of a comptroller candidate. He has enlisted as his campaign manager Marc Caplan, a founder of the left-leaning Legislative Electoral Action Program (LEAP), a prototype for successful grass-roots electoral coalitions throughout New England. And he has aggressively sought newspaper endorsements as well as increased coverage of the traditionally neglected comptroller's campaign.

Curry's internal polls show the race a dead heat. To win, he must convince people that the office matters—and why.

-P.B.

THIS INTERVIEW APPEARED IN AUGUST IN THE Bucharest daily *Adevarul*, the successor to Romania's Communist Party organ *Scinteia*. Silviu Brucan, the former ideology chief for the Front for National Salvation (FNS) interim government, and Nicolae Militaru, the FNS defense minister until February of this year, give previously undisclosed details about internal opposition to the dictatorship before the revolution.

Perhaps most revealing is the admission in the FNS newspaper that the revolution

INTERVIEW

was a combination of putsch and popular uprising. When FNS President Ion Iliescu grabbed power on December 22, he justified his position as representative of a spontaneous, popular revolution.

At the same time, Brucan and Militaru have been relegated from top posts in the FNS to positions of relative outsiders. Under executed President Nicolae Ceausescu, Brucan had been a ranking party member until his expulsion, and Militaru, a general. The many omissions include the activities of the Front before December 1989 and the nature of the deal that the conspirators struck with the Securitate generals.

The interview was translated and shortened by Paul Hockenos and William Totok. **SILVIU BRUCAN:** Some opposition to Ceausescu existed as early as his re-election as Communist Party general secretary in 1965, although its adherents were not able to meet openly. People who knew him very well were not pleased with his re-election. ... He understood that he had to solidify power as quickly as possible. Afterward there arose the first functioning core of dissidents, which included Ion Ionita [defense minister, 1966-76] and Gens. Militaru and Stefan Kostyal. Several plans had been worked out before Ceausescu actually fell, including a plan for violent overthrow from within. As of 1983, I had regular contact with Ionita.

So, through conspiratorial methods, the three-person core had established links to the different groups within the power structures.

S.B.: To topple Ceausescu we needed to penetrate the three most important pillars of his power base, namely the Communist Party, the army and the Securitate. We understood that our plot had to be part of a popular uprising and not simply a military putsch. But the dictator was ruthless about preventing the contact we needed to link the military plot with popular resistance. The two forces were separated until 1989. This explains the antagonism that still exists between them.

A French journalist claims that both the uprising and the military plot were decisively orchestrated from abroad.

S.B.: Yes. ... [Journalist] Michel Castex claims that the revolution was manipulated by [Soviet President Mikhail] Gorbachov. He portrays Gorbachov as a superman who decided everything in Eastern Europe.

Was there really a "conspiracy of generals" as far back as 1983-84?

NICOLAE MILITARU: Yes, already in the middle of the '70s Ionita and Gen. Ion Gheorhe felt that a coup could be successful. A putsch alone, however, would have been insufficient. In the '80s, the situation was much different: the economy was collapsing, the people were

Pre-revolution Romania from the inside out

hungry, there were shortages of heat and electricity. The political situation was unbearable. The time had finally come. We had carefully studied the crisis that occurred during the 1977 earthquake, when the entire state apparatus was crippled in the absence of the dictator and his wife, who were on an official trip to Africa. Nobody wanted the responsibility of taking over the country's leadership. At first, we were unable to make contact with members of the politburo. They all declined. Later, through [politburo member] Ioan Ursu, we are able to know months in advance when foreign visits were to take place. We hoped to follow the putsch through with the assistance of at least one large Bucharest military unit. We also had access to the munitions depot in Tirgoviste.

Who was supposed to replace Ceausescu?

N.M.: Ionita and I had met with Iliescu, whom Brucan also considered a possibility.

Was a change in the political system itself also part of the initial plot?

N.M.: No. At the beginning we had not considered that. Nor had Iliescu. In fact, I can say for certain that he rejected any alteration of the existing order. Later we distanced ourselves from him for this very reason. ... Only within the past few years did he finally reject the Communist dogma and speak up for fundamental changes within the system.

Explain your plan in more detail.

N.M.: First, the Ceausescu circle was to be neutralized. Second, the radio and TV stations were to be occupied in order to call the population to an uprising.

Was there an actual date set?

N.M.: Nothing like an "hour X." But we did have the putsch date set for October 15-17, 1984, when the Ceausescus were supposed to be out of the country. But unexpectedly, the heads of the largest Bucharest military units, our major supporters, were transferred to assist with the corn harvest. It was clear that we had been exposed.

Were there signs of betrayal?

N.M.: Yes, several. Kostyal was arrested and banned to Cuerta de Arges. Ionita and I were summoned to the Central Committee and prohibited under threat to have any further meetings. Thanks to the manner of our conspiracy plans, only three people knew the whole strategy. That saved us from further measures.

What role did the dissident movements inside the party, the army and the Securitate play in the events of December 1989?

N.M.: Our strategy had already opened splits within the Securitate and the army, although not until later within the party. Resistance had been voiced to Ceausescu within the party, for example, from Constantin Parvelscu at the XI Party congress [1979] and from Virgil Trofin at Central Committee meetings. ... Over the years individual ministers and party functionaries opposed some of the president's policies, but all of these actions occurred within the parameters of Ceausescu's game rules. ... Only later did the first real splits in the party occur, when Brucan went to the Western press with the demands of the Brasov workers after the Nov. 15, 1987, uprising



there. In 1988 Brucan gave Radio Free Europe and Voice of America interviews, in which he laid out an alternative program to Ceausescu's. Through an open letter [also published in the West] of six former party functionaries [including Brucan and Parvelescu] in March 1989, Ceausescu lost a good deal of prestige in the party and across the country. Then opposition really began to spread.

S.B.: Through Ionita, Militaru, Kostyal and many others within the army, a Military Resistance Committee (MRC) was formed in 1989, with 20 generals and many officers among its members.

They had at their disposal a nationwide information network composed of the ranking officers from the different weaponry units. The

Some opposition to executed President Nicolae Ceausescu existed as early as his re-election as Communist Party general secretary in 1965, although its adherents were not able to meet openly.

army did indeed open fire on demonstrators in Timisoara, Bucharest and other cities. But that is because there were also Ceausescu-loyal command units. Only on December 22, when Militaru took over as defense minister and assigned MRC members the command of the big divisions, could the revolutionaries yell, "The army is with us!" The claim that this was a 180-degree turnaround just isn't true. The dissident army factions prevented an all-out massacre.

But things aren't so clear with the Securitate. Would you refute claims that the Securitate still enjoys a powerful position in the new structures?

S.B.: The splits that were opened in the power apparatus brought us valuable advantages and unwanted disadvantages. [In other words, the government must live with the deal that it struck with the Securitate.] In regard to the Securitate, three departments must be considered: the regular troops of the Interior Ministry, the special troops trained for guerrilla warfare and the troops of the domestic repression apparatus itself. The first department was critical to the revolution's success. We had won almost all of its commanders to our side. Since 1989, Militaru was in touch with the ranking general in charge of these troops. It was through him that contact was established to the other generals and commanders. The journalist Castex cannot understand why these troops and officers, approximately 25,000 men, have not been sentenced or imprisoned. The Securitate troops cannot be simply branded as hooligans or murderers.

But Ceausescu controlled other special units of the Securitate. Are these the "untraceable terrorists"?

S.B.: There were four types of armed insurgency groups: the officers from the military Securitate school in Baneasa (2,000 men) under the command of Nicolae Andruta Ceausescu [the president's brother], the so-called USLA special anti-terrorist units (about 800 men), the so-called "5. Direction" of the Securitate, which was directly responsible for the Ceausescu family's protection (450 soldiers), and then the Bucharest Securitate (800 troops). All of these units were composed of highly trained sharpshooters proficient in the techniques of urban guerrilla warfare. They possessed automatic weapons with infrared heat detectors, which explains why there were active only at night [during the revolution].

Can we assume that they all remained united against the people?

N.M.: There's no clear answer to that. It is certain that after the first sound shellings they received, they abandoned their initial strategy. ... Many officers had two flats and false identity papers [which enabled them to escape]. They were labeled as terrorists, and they were.

Where are they now?

N.M.: At first they were imprisoned by the soldiers and the revolutionaries. But the Securitate officers let them free again. Many went into hiding once Ceausescu's execution was televised.

But it is known where they are now?

N.M.: Some had passports and fled across Hungary and Turkey. The others are still among us.

You know more than you're saying.

N.M.: The time has finally come to say that the Romanian terrorists were from the beginning supported by foreign forces. There were supposed to have been 30 foreigners, mostly Palestinians, who were trained in Baneasa.

All right, we won't ask further. Is there anything else that you can tell us about your preparations leading up to December 1989?

N.M.: To lead the coup, Radu, Kostyal and I had special pistols with silencers that would put the victims to sleep for 24 hours. I had established contact with a diplomat in the Soviet Embassy in Bucharest as well as the Soviet mission in Constanta. The Soviets were definitely interested in our plan, but they had instructions from Moscow not to interfere too much in Romanian internal affairs.

But can we assume that the Soviets, including Gorbachov, knew almost everything about the plot?

N.M.: They knew everything. □

Budget

Continued from page 3

efit the U.S.—for instance, the denomination of oil prices in dollars—are tacitly exchanged for American military protection. If, as many on the left suggest, the U.S. pulled all its troops from Europe, Asia and the Middle East, the move could imperil the dollar and spark a financial crisis at home. Yet in the long term, of course, the country's financial health depends on reducing the U.S. presence abroad.

Institutional Breakdown. Both liberals and conservatives alike acknowledge a breakdown in federal institutions, but only in those whose programs they oppose. Liberals rail against military waste, while conservatives call for abolishing the Education and Energy departments. Liberals continue to press for programs that would expand the departments of Education and Health and Human Services without even trying to first reform them, while conservatives continue to feed the maw of the military-industrial complex.

Unfortunately, much of the federal bureaucracy—from the Pentagon to the Post Office to the Department of Commerce—is simply not equipped to meet late 20th century economic challenges. For instance, the U.S. is one of the few advanced capitalist governments that has no agency or institution overseeing economic planning. More Commerce Department staff are engaged in weather forecasting than in economic forecasting.

Other federal agencies and cabinet departments also play highly questionable roles. Health and Human Services functions as an adjunct to wasteful and parasitic health insurance companies—a role that it would re-

tain in most of the current national health insurance schemes being batted about Washington. And since its inception, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has proven either ineffective or corrupt or both, whether under Democrats or Republicans.

Given these enduring economic crises, the U.S. faces the same systemic challenge that it confronted during the 19th century. Then, too, the major economic and political institutions had begun to break down under the impact of changes in industry and international relations. The banking system was in chaos, while Congress was controlled by the railroad lobbies. The executive branch was not equipped to oversee a national economy or to guide the country's emergence as a world power. Major reform was necessary, and eventually it came.

But that was then and this is now. At the end of the 19th century, the U.S. was teeming with political movements and proposals for change. The period from 1890 to 1920 remains a high-water mark in American intellectual and political life, equaled only by the republic's first two decades.

One cannot make the same case for the present period of political somnolence and intellectual withdrawal. Instead of Theodore Roosevelt, we have George Bush; instead of Henry Cabot Lodge, we have Orrin Hatch or George Mitchell; instead of John Dewey, we have George Gilder. Instead of a nation grappling with the requisites of world power, we are now forced to reconcile ourselves to imperial decline.

The prospects for significant reform are dim. Most likely Americans will have to endure at least another decade of stalemate and deadlock in Washington. □

Connecticut

Continued from page 8

whose stated objective was to elect pro-choice Democratic women to Congress.

Ethnic politics: Underlying the battle is the changing nature of the ethnic and demographic landscape. Since many white ethnics who once ruled urban party machines such as New Haven's have migrated to the suburbs in the past few decades, political thinkers mistakenly believe those groups no longer help determine elections, says Jim Fisher, a Yale American studies professor. "Many intellectuals think of ethnics as new immigrants," he adds. "There's a sense that it's a nostalgic evocation of when ethnic politics made a difference. But it still makes a difference."

The group known as "Reagan Democrats"—white working- or middle-class ethnic voters swayed by Reagan's attacks on liberal elitism and social programs benefiting non-whites—is just as likely to live in suburbs as in cities. Fisher sees an emergence of "upwardly mobile Republicans" with the potential to tap into their disaffection.

Tom Scott is that kind of politician. He has won five straight terms as a Republican state senator in a predominantly Democratic district by appealing to disaffected Reagan Democrats. His working-class parents moved from the city to suburban Milford when Scott was five. They resented what they saw as a "breakdown in values," he says. "There is a lot of frustration [in] that there used to be a better way. Twenty years ago there was certainty of swift punishment if you committed a crime. If you killed someone, you got the electric chair. ... My family knew poverty, but they weren't out killing people. They and

other ethnics like them don't buy the argument that poverty breeds crime."

A proponent of English-only laws, Scott argues that teaching Spanish in the schools and using it in government functions limits Hispanics' ability to advance in society. He cites statistics showing that only 6 percent of students in bilingual courses learn English after three years. Earlier generations of immigrants rose in the American system, says Scott, by having to learn English.

Up for grabs: DeLauro also speaks about the immigrant dream. She too knows from poverty: her mother worked for years, first in a Wooster Square sweatshop, then in a rifle factory. Her father quit school because of his poor English—bilingual education didn't exist then.

DeLauro discusses her mother's factory work to highlight the need for child-care support and economic conversion. Visiting a senior center, she combines a broadside against health-insurance rate hikes with personal memories of many of the residents' families.

Her family's roots have made conservative machine Democrats—mostly Italian-Americans and Irish-Americans—feel comfortable about working hard for her. Liberal and progressive coalitions are joining her campaign because she has fought for their causes during the past two decades. DeLauro believes that Democrats can unite the left-of-center issue-oriented faction with more culturally conservative white ethnics without ducking the issues.

"Democrats in some ways got scared in 1980 when they lost," she says. "They didn't talk as much as in the past about the kind of values the Democratic Party stands for. We were hurt by that."

"People are starting to talk again about the role government can play," adds DeLauro, clenching her fists. "We've got to get the federal government to work for people. ... It has. It can. It has to."

Campaigns like DeLauro's will determine whether, given the right pitch, voters with the swing vote in Washington's shifting balance of power agree with her. □

Paul Bass writes for the *New Haven Advocate*, where a version of this story originally appeared.

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Bhutto's battle and the long feud between civil and military rule

ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 6, THE PRIME minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, met with U.S. Ambassador Robert Oakley. According to sources close to Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Oakley insisted that, as far as he knew, there was nothing to the rumors swirling around Islamabad the previous five days that the military was preparing to move against the Bhutto government.

Later that afternoon, troops surrounded Bhutto's residence, seized the state-run telephone and TV facilities, shut off all communications into and out of the federal capital, occupied key ministries and began seizing records. At the same time, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and the appointment of the leader of the PPP's parliamentary opposition, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, as prime minister of a new "caretaker" government until national elections on October 24.

Events since that day have been tumultuous, nearly theatrical, as Pakistan struggles with a 45-year rift between civilian and military power—the resolution of which will go a long way toward defining the nature of Pakistani society and government.

President Ishaq Khan clearly acted at the behest of a military establishment that had been leery of democracy in general and Bhutto specifically. Indeed, most observers express surprise that Bhutto lasted as long as she did. The PPP plurality won in November 1988, Bhutto's subsequent success in aligning a majority of the National Assembly and her ascent to the prime minister's office all came in the context of a nation dominated for its entire history by the military, with whom Bhutto's family has had a longstanding feud.

President Ishaq Khan justified Bhutto's dismissal with allegations of corruption and nepotism. The new regime initiated "accountability" hearings for the Bhutto government before special tribunals established under laws originally passed by the military dictatorship of Gen. Mohammed Zia ul-Haq. The charges facing Bhutto and her supporters are the same assertions with which Gen. Zia justified his seizure of power in 1977 from an elected PPP government headed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir's father. He was executed on trumped-up murder charges in 1979.

Guilty until proven innocent: At the moment, Bhutto's life does not appear to be threatened, but her political future and that of her party remain uncertain. The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights recently released a report raising serious questions about the ability of the tribunals to ensure due process. According to Bill O'Neill of the New York-based committee, the tribunals stand the presumption of innocence on its head. According to the orders establishing the tribunals, in cases where defendants are charged with receiving bribes, "the court shall make a presumption of guilt of misconduct if the accused ... cannot produce a satisfactory financial accounting" of unexplained personal assets. If anyone in Pakistan finds these conditions unsavory, they had better be careful about saying so. The tribunals have dramatically expanded contempt powers to jail anyone who "scandalizes the Special Court or otherwise does anything which tends to bring the Special Court into hatred, ridicule or contempt." The tribunals also impose severe time restrictions that interfere with the defendant's ability to present witnesses.



Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto: out of office but still fighting.

If convicted, Bhutto faces the prospect of being barred from political activity. In August, press reports indicated that the military would try to keep her from running in the elections. Congressional pressure on the Bush administration and a tremendous outpouring of public support inside Pakistan for Bhutto have made that difficult. Instead, the tribunal proceedings have turned into wild affairs. On October 2, Bhutto appeared before the high court in Lahore, the stronghold of her opposition. To Bhutto's surprise, 300 PPP supporters burst into the courtroom, staging a pro-Bhutto rally and causing the proceedings to be cancelled. Police stood by as dozens of people were injured.

Bhutto, described in the London *Times* as "visibly shaken" by the incident, accused the police of allowing her supporters to run amok in an attempt to discredit the PPP. Her aides insisted that police provocateurs had actually fomented the rally. Opponents naturally pointed to the demonstration as an example of PPP irresponsibility and inability to control its supporters.

Pakistani politics are played by hard-ball rules that make the politicians on Capitol Hill look like Little Leaguers. The corruption and nepotism accusations against Bhutto are mild in the context of a country awash in covert arms and heroin money. The PPP insists that if there is going to be accountability for corruption, it should include all past regimes. The problem with such an inquiry is that if anyone seriously investigates corruption among the military and the various civilian politicians who front for it, there will be no one left to run the country.

Few observers believe that financial corruption touches Bhutto herself, but there seems to be a universal assumption inside Pakistan that her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has profited handsomely from her time in office. If so, it would be safe to assume that there is plenty of evidence on which to convict him of corruption, particularly given the presumption of guilt before the tribunals. Yet when Zardari was arrested on October 10, the police offered ludicrous kidnapping and extortion charges as the reason.

Zardari was accused of plotting to kidnap

businessman Murtaza Hussain Bukhari and extort money from him. The charges were based on an article in the Pakistani press that was subsequently retracted. Nonetheless, Zardari remains in jail as the election campaign, in which he is a candidate for the National Assembly, goes on.

Confusion in Washington: The Pakistani military shrewdly waited for the congressional recess in Washington before moving against Bhutto, and it has welcomed Saddam Hussein's headline-hogging to keep attention diverted. Nevertheless, congressional concern over the events in Pakistan mobilized quickly. Within two weeks, more than

PAKISTAN

20 members of the U.S. House and Senate had sent letters of concern to the Bush administration, many calling for a cutoff of aid to Pakistan under the provisions of Section 513 of Public Law 101-167, which mandates the immediate severance of all U.S. aid to any country whose democratically elected government has been overthrown by a "military coup."

The administration's initial response can only be described as oafish. While even the *New York Times* called Bhutto's dismissal a "constitutional coup," the administration carefully avoided the word "coup" and hence the possibility of an aid cutoff.

From the start, it has been unclear whether the U.S. had any prior knowledge of the coup. Oakley either lied to Bhutto on the morning of August 6 or he genuinely did not know what would happen later that afternoon. Each possibility is disturbing.

If money talks, Pakistan should be one of the best friends the U.S. has in the Third World. Over the past 10 years, the U.S. has pumped \$5.325 billion in publicly acknowledged aid into Pakistan and funneled an additional \$4 billion to \$6 billion in "covert" aid to the rebels in Afghanistan through the Pakistani military and intelligence services. Last year's public appropriation of \$588 million, coupled with roughly \$200 million for the Afghan rebels, puts Pakistan behind only Israel and Egypt as the highest beneficiaries

of American largesse.

U.S. military and intelligence organizations have extremely close relationships with their Pakistani counterparts. If the U.S. had no advance notice of the coup, it ranks as one of the great intelligence failures in history.

Assuming that Oakley did know of the military's plans, did the U.S. support them? Several hours after his morning conversation with Bhutto on August 6, Oakley refused a further conversation with her, or, as a State Department press officer put it, "was otherwise unavailable." What was he doing? What could be more important to a U.S. ambassador than to meet with the sitting prime minister of a government by then obviously—even to U.S. intelligence—in jeopardy?

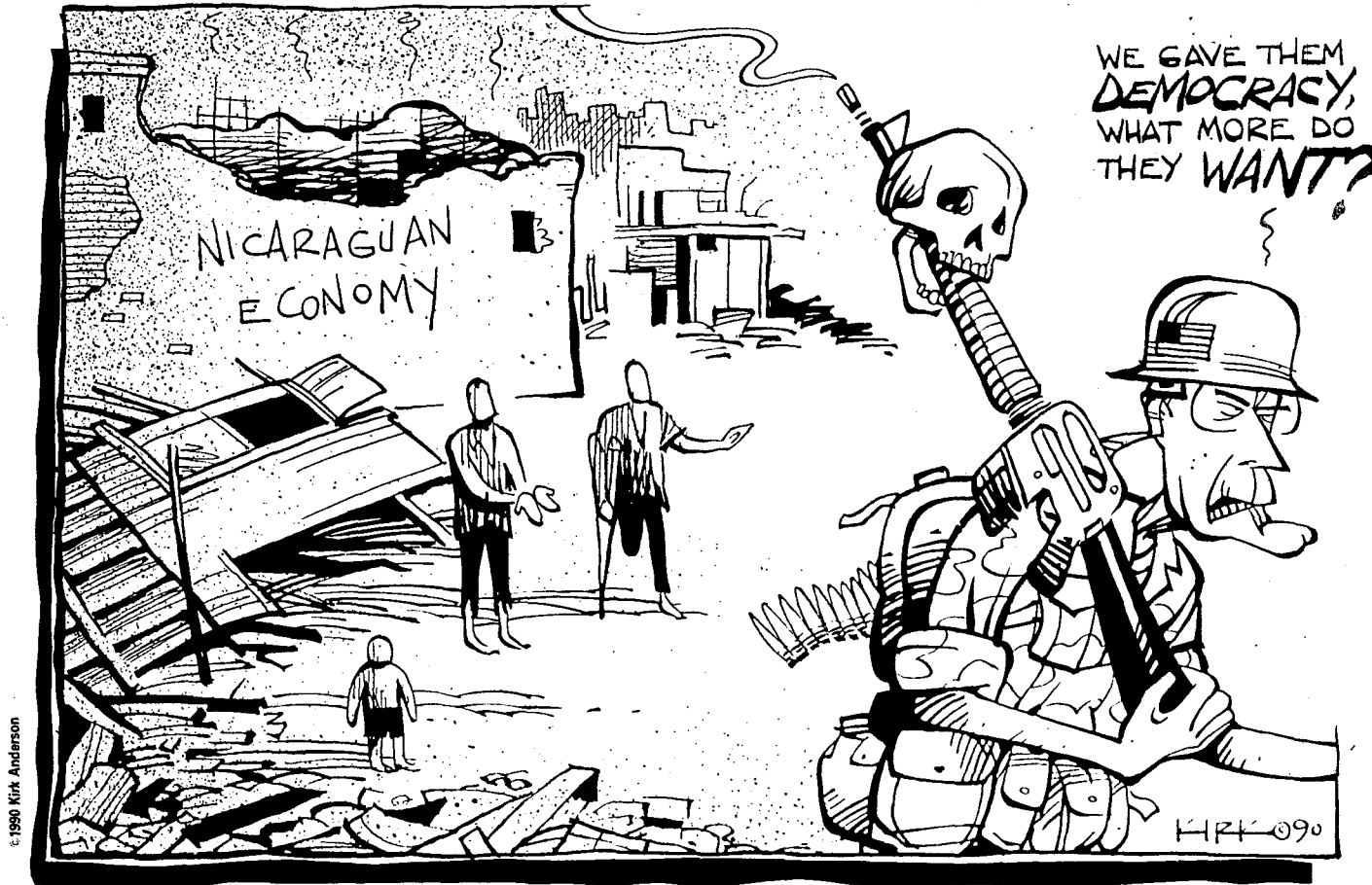
The Bush administration has consistently tried to downplay the seriousness of the situation. Officials have refused to comment and have dragged their feet in answering congressional inquiries. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft finally got around to answering the congressional letters of concern a month and a half after the coup, on September 26. In a series of letters to members of Congress, Scowcroft reiterated the constitutional rationale offered by Ishaq Khan for the dismissal and insisted that the legitimacy of the overthrow was "an internal matter for the judicial system of Pakistan to resolve." Preposterously, Scowcroft even claimed that "we have no reports" to the effect that military units had interfered with the operation of telephone and television services. Dozens of press reports indicate that state-run television refused to run a Bhutto press conference the evening of August 6. Reporters were unable to dial out of Islamabad until 11:45 that evening.

With liberty and justice: Everyone in Washington is careful to say that support for democracy in Pakistan does not necessarily mean support for Bhutto. One congressional staffer says, "We are perfectly willing to accept an [opposition] government that is freely and fairly elected." Critics cite a litany of failures and weakness that caused Bhutto to fall. "What has Benazir Bhutto got to show for 20 months in office?" continues the staffer. "Precious little." Critics of Bhutto point to widespread ethnic violence in her home province of Sind, persistent conflicts with the military and the troubling allegations of corruption surrounding her administration—particularly her husband.

All of these may have validity, but they obscure the fact that the opposition had failed to unseat Bhutto in a vote of no confidence last winter and undertook the coup only after it became clear in early August that another no-confidence vote would also fail. The U.S. professes to support democracy in Pakistan, yet democracy is more than periodic "free and fair" elections held whenever the military gets tired of the civilian regime.

Pakistan is deadlocked between the PPP and the military. In Punjab, for example, Bhutto's chief rival, provincial Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is closely linked to the military and has effectively kept Bhutto from asserting control over the province. Unless this week's election produces a surprising majority for Bhutto or the opposition, the government will remain deadlocked and vulnerable to the military and the U.S. will have to choose between its democratic rhetoric and a policy skewed toward military interests. □

John P. Canham-Clyne is a Washington, D.C.-based freelance journalist.



AID to Nicaragua: some things just aren't what they seem

By William I. Robinson

WHEN A MAJORITY OF NICARAGUANS cast their ballots for Violeta Chamorro last February, they did so with the expectation that the installation of a government friendly with the U.S. would open the spigot to massive international assistance. More than half a year later, however, the spigot has yet to open, and high-level Chamorro officials are expressing increasing irritation with the delays.

Documents prepared by several federal agencies involved in the U.S. aid program for Nicaragua explain why. They detail stringent conditions attached to the money—conditions that have placed the new government in a no-win situation. Essentially, the Chamorro administration must either comply with Washington's demands and risk political instability at home or forfeit help for reconstruction from the international community.

The Nicaraguans "ought to clean up their political environment" before U.S. aid and investment can flow, one U.S. official involved in the Nicaragua program told *In These Times*. Cleaning up the political environment, he made clear, means disciplining the militant Sandinista unions, reversing the former government's social and economic policies and opening the economy to U.S. business.

But the money that would come from such a political cleanup may not be enough to "jump start" the Nicaraguan economy, as the Bush administration put it. In May, when Congress approved a \$300 million aid package for fiscal year 1990, many Nicaraguans complained that the amount was a fraction of the country's needs, and a pittance in comparison to the billions the U.S. spent covertly and overtly on the anti-Sandinista campaign in earlier years—a campaign that inflicted up to \$17.8 billion in direct and indirect losses on the Nicaraguan economy.

Rude awakening: Shortly after UNO's

election victory, a team from the government-elect, headed by Minister of the Presidency Antonio Lacayo and now-Central Bank President Francisco Mayorga, presented U.S. officials with their confidential 18-page "UNO Agenda for Economic Recovery." In it the team detailed a three-year plan in which the country would need \$1.8 billion in foreign assistance to reactivate the economy and stabilize finances. The team returned from Washington satisfied that it had won U.S. approval.

The rude awakening came less than a week after Chamorro's April 25 inauguration. The new government was forced to sign a protocol to receive the first shipment of emergency food supplied under the U.S. "Food for Progress" program.

The protocol obliged the government to: "introduce into the National Assembly requests to annul or reform all decrees and orders that monopolize, control and limit economic freedom"; to "seek to place in private hands all productive resources whose privatization would not contravene important public policies" and "to covenant that all state enterprises ... involved in the production of goods and services will be privatized within a framework of democratic productive property."

AID returns to Nicaragua: The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) is responsible for overall management of the federal government's Nicaragua program.

According to an AID "fact sheet" prepared during the congressional debate last April but not widely circulated, the \$300 million allocated for Nicaragua includes \$47 million for repatriation and assistance to the demobilized contras, \$128 million for production imports, \$75 million for "economic growth and development needs" and \$50 million for payment of arrears to international financial agencies.

Each of these categories, with the exception of contra demobilization, carries strict conditions that must be met before monies are made available.

For instance, the funds for imports—

which must be purchased from U.S. suppliers—are to be disbursed in accordance with "the development of a policy reform agenda and the initiation of reform actions." Food aid is to be provided "to help initiate agricultural policy reforms." In fact, \$1 million is set aside specifically for "economic planning and public management," to "assist the new government in overall economic policy planning, including privatization."

AID says the assistance package aims to orient Nicaragua toward "sound economic

AID is exercising an effective veto over other international financing until its demands are met.

policies." This means "returning the country to a market economy," an AID official involved in the program said. "What we are looking for is the standard orthodox stuff."

The "standard orthodox stuff" includes privatization of industry, agriculture and services, elimination of domestic subsidies, lifting of market regulations, eliminating conditions on foreign investment, financial and trade liberalization and incentives for the export sector.

U.S. economic blackmail: The Nicaraguan authorities are in a particular bind because AID is exercising an effective veto over other sources of international financing until its demands are satisfied.

UNO's economic recovery plan depends on assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as other Western countries. But before Nicaragua can become credit-worthy, it must first pay its arrears. Although Nicaragua owes several hundred million in arrears, the \$50 million allocated for such payment by the U.S. would be enough to make it eligible

for new international credits of up to \$900 million.

But, according to AID documents, this "support for normalizing relations with the international financial institutions" would be "linked to the establishment of a sound policy framework." The monies allocated to pay Nicaragua's arrears "will only be disbursed as the government complies" with the conditions, the official said.

Moreover, they will not be released until Nicaragua actually signs a preliminary agreement with the IMF and the World Bank, he said. This places Nicaragua in a peculiar situation in which Managua must first satisfy the IMF to get the AID monies, but can only satisfy the IMF by fulfilling the AID conditions.

Nicaraguan authorities did open up negotiations with the IMF in late September. But, as the AID official explained, "we do not expect anything imminent," estimating that it could take from three to nine months of negotiations before agreements could be signed.

In addition, according to the AID official, the \$50 million won't actually be dispersed until there is a "support group" formed among the international community (principally Western Europe and Japan) that commits itself to providing the monies to cover the rest of Nicaragua's arrears. In other words, the U.S. won't release its promised monies until the other Western nations promise to sign on also.

More AID for the corporate world: One of AID's objectives is to secure greater access for U.S. corporations. The Sandinista government approved a generous foreign investment law in 1989 that allowed for profit repatriation, access to internal credit and minimal return guarantees on investment capital. But AID is complaining that this legislation still leaves too much discretion to the government and must therefore be amended.

On his return from a visit to Washington in mid-September, Lacayo explained that reform is tied up in the legislature, where the Sandinistas have considerable clout. Amendments, he said, might take months. This leaves Chamorro with the choice of either bypassing constitutionality or postponing U.S. assistance.

The U.S. Department of Commerce affirmed in an internal report issued last May to encourage U.S. business to invest in post-electoral Nicaragua that, with the Sandinistas ousted from power, "the U.S. can once again resume its role as Nicaragua's most vital trading partner." The document noted that "the expected privatization of some 160 government-owned companies opens up interesting opportunities for investors" but complained that "detailed plans for the privatization process have not yet been formalized."

Nicaraguan agriculture has great potential, it continued, but U.S. agribusiness cannot take advantage because "marketing and sales of most export products are currently controlled by Nicaraguan state-run corporations." The memo similarly surveys industry and mining, emphasizing that the opportunities are there for the picking once state controls and marketing boards are dismantled.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the AID "fact sheet" stresses "agricultural policy reforms." "We think raising agricultural production requires individual marketing and pricing," the AID official said. This would mean the dissolution of marketing boards set up by the Sandinista government and

the elimination of government price guarantees for peasant producers. "The land question is also very important," he added. "The land ought to be held by the private sector."

AID as imperialism? In this sense, the AID plan for Nicaragua is similar to IMF restructuring and stabilization programs currently sweeping Latin America. As in Argentina, Peru, Brazil and elsewhere, these programs—irrespective of their internal economic logic—are having a devastating effect on the living conditions of the poor and the working-class majorities.

In the less developed and more dependent Central American countries, AID has a particularly noxious history of imposing conditions and dictating policies.

In Honduras, for instance, AID began massive funding in 1981 for liberalization but suspended the final \$75 million disbursement in 1985 after the government refused further devaluation of the currency. With the AID boycott, Honduras became ineligible for credits from other international agencies. It was not until 1989, when a new government was elected and carried out the devaluation program, that

the \$75 million was finally released.

In Costa Rica, AID spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the '80s in the creation of private and parastatal agencies involved in designing, propagating and executing social and economic policies (see *In These Times*, Sept. 19). Chilean John Biehl, who was Oscar Arias' closest personal adviser, was pressured into resigning in 1988 when he publicly denounced AID for creating a "parallel government" that was "carrying out an invisible privatization of the Costa Rican state."

But in Nicaragua, the AID program has

deeper political undercurrents: reversal of many of the social and economic transformations carried out by the Sandinista government, including agrarian reform, subsidies for the poor, and health and education programs. "U.S. assistance is being sent to re-establish capitalism in Nicaragua," former President Daniel Ortega recently concluded. "It is aid for the rich."

AID officials argue that the U.S. is merely helping the Chamorro government fulfill its own programs. In fact, the UNO plan does not differ substantially from that of

Continued on page 22

Economic crisis leads to battle of wills

By William Gasperini

MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

LESS THAN SIX MONTHS INTO ITS SCHEDULED six-year term, President Violeta Chamorro's government remains locked in a battle of wills with the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) over Nicaragua's future, pitting fundamental ideological differences against a backdrop of a severe post-war economic crisis.

The long contra war is over, and the country has returned to a relative calm. But the military battle has merely shifted into the political arena in a showdown over who controls economic power in a country that has known scant social peace throughout its history.

Comprised primarily of business-oriented technocrats, the Chamorro administration has sought to win the favor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank by implementing a series of neoliberal economic measures to move Nicaragua toward a free-market economy. They include budget cuts, dismissing more than 25,000 state employees and privatizing state-run businesses.

The resounding electoral victory for Chamorro's National Opposition Union (UNO) coalition in February and the essential collapse of the former East bloc—on which the country had primarily relied throughout 11 years of Sandinista rule—have strengthened the government's case as it grapples with the virtual collapse of Nicaragua's economy.

Inflation has soared to over 5,300 percent so far this year, and unemployment has risen to almost 40 percent as thousands of ex-contras, soldiers and returning refugees flood the job market. Meanwhile, continuing political instability has deterred prospective investment the government has eagerly sought to encourage.

To top it all off, nature has compounded the misery with a prolonged drought in key food- and coffee-producing areas, affecting domestic food supplies and cutting deeply into expected returns from sales of export crops. The country's health-care system is in crisis, with shortages of even the most basic supplies, worsening malnutrition, infant mortality and the spread of infectious diseases.

The country has received limited foreign aid, including \$250 million of a promised \$300 million from the U.S. (most of it going to clear up debt arrears with banks to free up new loans). Faced with this situation, Chamorro's top advisers say they have no

choice but to do what they deem necessary to correct the grave distortions in the economy, particularly by cutting a bloated state bureaucracy.

The revolution continues: Yet so far, the Sandinistas have succeeded in blocking almost every move the government tries to make. With a well-oiled political machine, control over several radio and newspaper media and powerful labor organizations, the FSLN shows it retains clout.

The Chamorro administration started out playing hardball by trying to fire thousands of state workers, and succeeded only in triggering two general strikes. After a crippling strike in May, a new confrontation in July led to pitched street battles between pro- and anti-government forces before negotiations defused the situation.

Both of these earlier "rounds" forced the government to retreat and devise new strategies to circumvent the Sandinistas. Some public workers have been quietly dismissed, and subsidies have been withdrawn from inefficient state businesses—most of which had been confiscated by the Sandinistas and kept afloat only with public funding.

As these moves have had little impact, the government has tried to take the conciliatory route by inviting the Sandinistas to join in a national *concertacion*, or dialogue, aimed at reaching consensus on policies.

The FSLN, however, has responded by saying the government has only created conditions that make it impossible for a successful dialogue. As both sides have maneuvered in recent weeks, former President Daniel Ortega announced what amounts to a demand for power-sharing, insisting that the government comply with a 10-point document that would virtually dismantle the Chamorro economic program.

Using the militaristic rhetoric the Sandinistas seem incapable of shedding even 11 years after coming down from the mountains, Ortega blasted the government's "war on the workers" and called for Nicaraguans to "defend the conquests of the revolution."

Simultaneously, pro-Sandinista workers formed a "Front for Popular Struggle" and called on citizens to become "civic guerrillas," with plans for ongoing resistance ranging from street marches to burning old tires at intersections—a practice that dates from the 1979 insurrection—to refusing to pay utility bills.

By taking things to the streets, the San-

dinistas appear unwilling to compromise—or even to talk in a civilized manner. Something of a breakthrough came after a Sandinista "campaign of civil disobedience" fizzled October 1 when the government postponed a plan to lay off thousands of public workers. Since then, a number of public dialogues have been attempted, though to no avail at press time. Both sides, however, seem to be reaching the conclusion that it is in neither of their interests to return to confrontation in the streets.

A matter of style: Increasingly tough language in Ortega's recent public statements may reflect a need for him to shore up his position within the FSLN; the radical sectors feel he has been too compromising. When the pro-Sandinista unions decided on the civil-disobedience campaign, some workers came very close to criticizing Ortega publicly.

Ironically, former Internal Security Minister Tomas Borge, the other surviving founder of the FSLN, may be undergoing a change of heart in the other direction. In an interview with the British newspaper *The Independent*, Borge was quoted as admitting that the Sandinistas had become bureaucratic and distant from their base. Borge also said that arrogance led to many errors, and that "arrogance is the enemy of all good revolutionaries."

Many of the monetarist policies now being considered by Chamorro were implemented by the Sandinistas themselves as they sought to deal with runaway inflation in 1988. Thousands of state workers lost their jobs under *compactacion*, while other measures sought to correct the effects of long-term government subsidies and other policy errors.

The difference now is partly one of style, according to a former economic adviser to the Sandinista government.

"When we had to let thousands of workers go we were careful to do it in close consultation with them, so they in effect participated in effecting policy," said Maria

*As shown in Nicaragua
this day, the
Chamorro administration
will not comply
with the
Washington's
policy of risk political
reform of some
country in front of
the international community.*

Rosa Renzi, now an economic analyst. "And we succeeded in reducing the fiscal deficit even amid the war and U.S. economic blockade. So I don't buy the argument that workers have to be sacrificed to control the deficit."

The current government's counter-argument is that it makes little economic sense to continue to underwrite inefficiency, and that shifting to a free-market economy is happening even in the Soviet Union and the former East bloc.

"We need to face the reality that most public employees are underemployed, at best, and need jobs with more dignity as well as productivity in a reactivated private sector," said Economy Minister Silvio de Franco. "We can then redirect resources to education, health and get the government out of the business of doing business."

Emergency action: To alleviate the impact of the economic program, Minister of the Presidency Antonio Lacayo—Chamorro's top adviser and the country's virtual president—announced the creation of a Social Emergency Fund for those unemployed, as well as emergency relief for farmers affected by the drought. He also postponed planned layoffs and effectively lowered rates for utility bills, taking some of the impetus out of the Sandinista plans for civil disobedience.

So far the armed forces have stayed out of the fray, although the government also plans to cut 10,000 more soldiers in the coming months. The army remains under the command of Gen. Humberto Ortega, the former president's brother, who has now become a close collaborator with Lacayo and other top government leaders. Ortega has repeatedly affirmed that the armed forces—including the police—will uphold the constitution and government even though they are Sandinista-created institutions.

During the previous strikes, however, the police were often reluctant to control the striking workers, who say the army is sympathetic to them as an institution "of the people." And practically no one fears a possible coup d'état, with the Sandinistas aware of the extreme international isolation such a move would cost them.

As the debate rages on, economic distortions have reached such a degree that prices for many products are higher than even in the U.S., while salaries lag far behind. The Sandinistas repeatedly warn of a major "social explosion," similar to unrest that has erupted due to nearly identical IMF austerity policies in other countries. Even so, most Nicaraguans seem exhausted with the prospect of more confrontation.

Just as the Sandinistas may be cornered by their own past and uncertain future, the Chamorro government is boxed in by its need to deal with the IMF and other lending institutions in a test of wills that shows few signs of ending soon.

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Gorbachov's reform plan offers Soviets new start

After months of discussion, and facing steady deterioration of production and distribution, President Mikhail Gorbachov has decided on a program for the restructuring of the Soviet economy. In principle, Gorbachov's plan is similar to the 500-day transition to a market economy advocated by economist Stanislav Shatalin and Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin. The two major differences are that the Gorbachov plan retains greater control over the transition and his program stretches over a longer time in an attempt to avoid uncontrolled inflation and massive unemployment—and to head off the popular anger that would accompany these problems.

Asserting that world experience has "proved the vitality and efficiency of the market economy," Gorbachov proposes the following goals:

- Maximum freedom of economic activity with commodity producers free to multiply their property and the national wealth.
- Full responsibility of enterprises and workers for their work, based on the equality of state, cooperative and private ownership.
- Competition among producers to increase the variety and quality of products and to cut costs and stabilize prices.
- Limitation of state price controls to essentials such as basic foods.
- Retention of the considerable non-market section of the economy that "cannot be guided by market criteria." This includes defense, health care, education, science and culture.
- Gradual integration into the world economy, including permission for foreign firms to enter the domestic market on an equal basis with Soviet enterprises.
- Social guarantees on all levels of government to provide equality of opportunity and state support of unemployables and other "socially vulnerable members of society."

These changes are being made, Gorbachov said, "to provide for the economic freedom of citizens, by establishing new conditions to encourage their diligence, creative abilities, initiative and high productivity." In short, to create a dynamic civil society, which is a basic necessity for modern production but which has been stifled by 70 years of one-party control over all aspects of Soviet life.

In the United States these profound changes in Soviet society are

seen by establishment politicians, academics and media pundits as a confession of socialism's failure and capitalism's triumph. And they are seen by some dogmatic socialists as socialism's betrayal and a needless surrender to capitalism. In our opinion, both these views are wrong. Gorbachov's reforms do open the door to capitalist development in the Soviet Union, but they are also necessary to create a social basis for socialism—as that concept was always understood before the Russian Revolution and the emergence of Stalinism and "real existing socialism." Both principles will be operative in Soviet society in the immediate future, and no one can now predict the outcome.

That is why Gorbachov's proposal, though under attack as too timid by Yeltsin and many others impatient for the dissolution of centralized bureaucracy, is an unprecedentedly bold move. Communists have long been good at admitting mistakes and failures as a way of continuing to provide more of the same—it was called self-criticism. But the changes now being proposed would do something that no national ruler has done in living memory: they would undermine the last fortress of his party's power and put his own in jeopardy.

There is, of course, no way of knowing whether Gorbachov is taking these steps simply to avoid being overthrown by an increasingly hostile people or whether he is genuinely committed to a democratic socialism. But ultimately it doesn't matter. Assuming that Gorbachov can get his program adopted and that he can carry it out successfully, he will have helped create the social basis for a society in which citizens would be truly self-governing.

To reach that point, they will have to experience many of the things that all working people do under capitalism. But, then, those experiences were the basis for Karl Marx's idea that the working class would be the engine leading society to socialism. Marx believed that as capitalism developed, the working class would come to include within itself all the skills and knowledge necessary for running society. And that as long as workers understood that socialism meant the end of all involuntary divisions of labor, it would be able to represent the interest of all humanity. That's what Marx meant when he wrote about working people constituting a vanguard class. But the Bolsheviks converted Marx's vanguard class into the Communists' vanguard party, a small elite that ruled in the name of the class but that continued the subordination and infantilization of workers and peasants as in czarist days.

And now, after 70 years of a false start, things are once again up for grabs.

LETTERS

Seeing is believing

AM I SEEING THINGS? IS THIS IN *THESE TIMES* OR *People* magazine? How unfortunate that Joel Bleifuss' article on Lynda Barry (*ITT*, Oct. 10) finds it necessary to mention that she is "prettier—and sexier" than her photos. One expects this sort of thing from mainstream publications, where the bottom line always comes down to how attractive a woman is to male evaluators (no matter what her skills or accomplishments), but it is a sorry state of affairs to see this condescending, sexist attitude creep into the pages of *In These Times*.

Jean Fallow
Iowa City, Iowa

Joel Bleifuss replies: Comments on personal appearance—especially flattering ones—do violate left etiquette. Prior to publication of my Lynda Barry profile, other editors and I argued about the wisdom of describing a person in a way that we all knew would rile politically correct readers. Our discussion at an impasse, we agreed to ask Lynda Barry if she found the phrase "prettier—and sexier—than the photos" objectionable. I told Barry of our predicament and read the passage. "That's the nicest thing I've heard all year," she said. "The problem with the left is that they don't realize that people have genitals."

Excess anger

JOEL BLEIFUSS ("THE FIRST STONE," *ITT*, OCT. 10) is certainly entitled to criticize Israel's policy regarding the distribution of gas masks, but there is no justification for his use of rhetoric that borders on bigotry.

For Bleifuss to compare Israel to Nazi Germany (as in his reference to Israel's alleged effort to "hit on the final solution to the Palestinian problem") and to resurrect Shylock-style stereotypes of Jews (as in his reference to Israel supposedly having "found a sure way to make a buck" through the sale of the gas masks) is to cloud the political debate with irrational charges and offensive terminology.

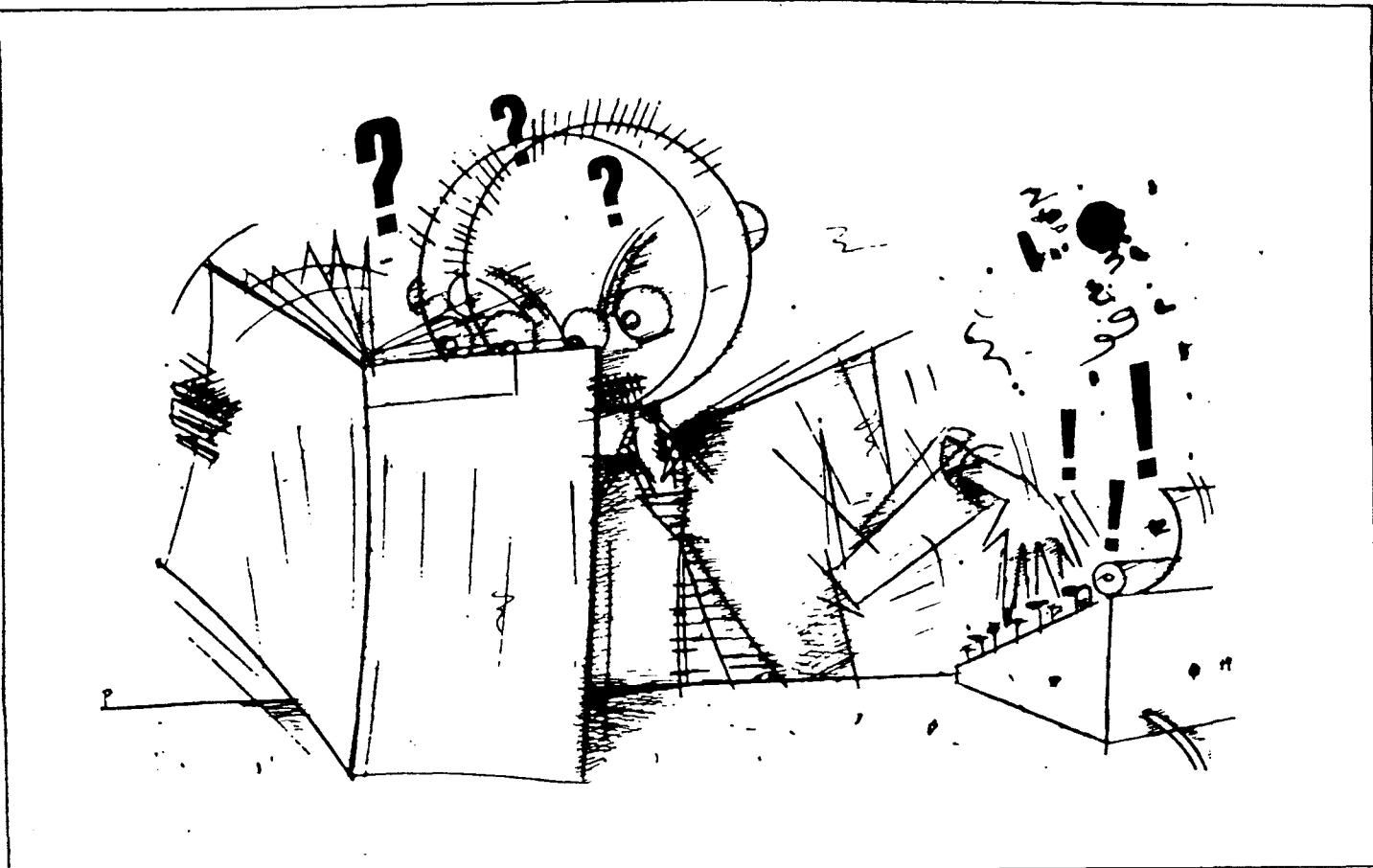
Bertram Korn Jr.
Executive Director, Committee for Accuracy
in Middle East Reporting in America
Philadelphia

Joel Bleifuss replies: Korn is right. I went too far in comparing the Nazis' policy of genocide to the Israeli government's decision to provide its citizens free gas masks while charging Palestinians for theirs.

Afrocentricism

THE WAY SALIM MUWAKKIL PORTRAYS AN AFROcentric curriculum (*ITT*, Oct. 3), no "fair-minded" person could object. But I've heard Muwakkil's source, Temple University professor M.K. Asante, lecture on Afrocentricity for two hours and more. Take the unarguable point, as Muwakkil puts it, that "Egypt was, and ... is a significant African civilization." Asante and other Afrocentrists heard on New York's WLIB radio go much further and claim Egypt as the origin of all science and civilization. This is a pre-Eurocentric debate that, if imposed in the curriculum, will offend a lot of Iraquo-Anatolo- and other Asiocentrics.

Teachers and social workers have reported to me that they've attended workshops



on Afrocentricity in which people who argued for seeing Egypt multiperspectively (i.e., African, Mediterranean, Fertile Crescent, Islamic, and, of course, Egypt and highland Ethiopia were Christian centuries before Germany and Poland) were dismissed as "racist" and "anti-African." One must teach that Egypt is solely African and ancient Egypt, at least, as black (that color presumably being defined in the peculiar North American manner).

Surely the most important point here should be not to sanction any nationalist (even American) or racist ideological view of history. The modern idea of Europe and Africa is a Eurocentric construct hardly more than 1,000 years old. Neither Rome nor Byzantium, not to mention ancient Ethiopia, Egypt or Greece, would have understood the terms. And "North Africans," most of whom are more likely to see themselves as Western Arabs, joint members of the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity, would not agree with Asante's interpretation.

For 500 years, at least, European intellectuals have debated the superiority of Greece over Palestine (i.e., Judeo-Christianity) as the best foundation for European civilization. But until late 19th-century (European) racism came along, nobody argued for Greece because it was European.

There is also a clear religious dimension in Asante's program of which curriculum reformers should be aware. He appeals for

a return to African polytheism and ancestor worship—which remains a serious undercurrent in the folk religion of the Caribbean and West Africa—as against orthodox Christianity or Islam.

Robert Harrison
Northport, N.Y.

Dimitrov revisited

JOANNE TEMCOV'S LETTER ON GEORGI DIMITROV (*ITT*, Oct. 10) is a pure example of Communist historiography of pre-*glasnost* vintage. I doubt that final proof will ever be available on whether or not the Bulgarian Communist Party leadership was responsible for planting in the St. Nedelia Cathedral in 1925 the bomb that was planned to kill the king, Cabinet and general staff. For one thing, the Communists have controlled the archives for too many years since then to leave the evidence, if they were responsible.

But the claim that Dimitrov's defense at the Reichstag fire trial "proves" that he or his party were not involved is absurd. Dimitrov defied Georing at that trial, and the reason he wasn't convicted was that the Nazis hadn't had time to purge the courts of all honorable judges. But Dimitrov's speech, which contains a typical Leninist rejection of terrorism as a Communist tactic, proves nothing except that he was a

clever man.

Temcov's picture of Dimitrov as a beloved leader who would have led the Bulgarians to a better life had he lived ignores crucial data about him. He was the head of the Communist International from 1934 to 1944. There is no evidence that he lifted a finger on behalf of hundreds of Bulgarian Communist refugees in the Soviet Union who were imprisoned and killed in Stalin's purges. (Their names, party history and sentences filled page after page of *Rabotnichesko Delo*, the Bulgarian Communist Party organ, last January.) He presided over the government that framed and killed hundreds of Communist, Agrarian and other leaders in Bulgaria in 1947, most prominent among whom were Nicola Petkov and Traicho Kostov.

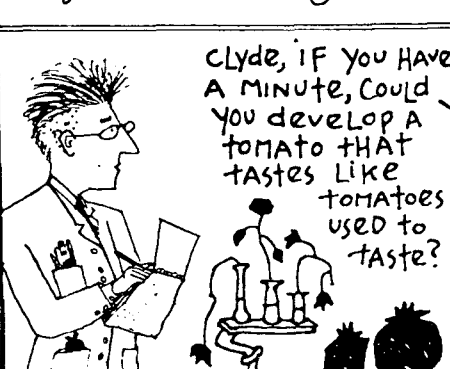
Since Temcov last visited Bulgaria in 1979, so much has changed that I doubt even the official organ of the Socialist Party (the renamed Communists) would now print her letter. They couldn't stand the laughter it would evoke both inside their party and throughout the land.

Gordon Haskell
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Editor's note: Please keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

SYLVIA

Clyde, the Domestic Scientist



by Nicole Hollander



Kuwait invasion exposes contradictions and frustrations throughout Arab world

By Elie Chalala

BEFORE THE INVASION OF KUWAIT, THE Arab world was divided into three blocs: the "haves" were grouped in the equivalent of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar; the "have nots" joined the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), which consists of Iraq, Yemen, Jordan and Egypt. The North African states, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Libya, joined a third alliance, the Maghreb Cooperation Council (MCC). This alliance includes mostly poor nations—Libya being the exception. Among those left outside these three organizations are Sudan, Syria and Lebanon.

After Iraq invaded Kuwait, the old alliances broke up, but the new ones still reveal a division based on rich and poor nations. As anticipated, Saudi Arabia, the Kuwaiti government in exile, the United Arab Emirates and other small sheikdoms—all members of the GCC—condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, supported the August 10 Arab summit resolutions imposing sanctions against Iraq and accepted the presence of Western troops on their territories. Joining them were non-GCC members Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Lebanon. The rest of the Arab states opposed the resolutions directly and indirectly. Iraq, Libya and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) voted against the resolutions; Algeria and Yemen abstained; Jordan and Sudan expressed "reservations"; Tunisia was absent. This fragmentation process reached its peak when only 13 out of 21 states attended an Arab League meeting on August 30, thereby ending a tradition of Arab League unanimity on all important issues.

The varied reactions of Arab states to Iraq's Kuwait invasion—the positive as well as the negative—are neither the result of Saddam Hussein's charisma and his country's model of development nor admiration for his Arab opponents, much less the Western powers. Instead, the invasion has been a catalyst in exposing contradictions and frustrations inside Arab countries that had been overshadowed by the conflict with Israel. The reaction, therefore, reflects many of the problems that afflict the Arab world rather than an endorsement of either the Iraqi or the Saudi position.

The Egyptian and Jordanian positions toward the invasion are similar in one respect, although the two countries went in different directions: their policies enjoy wide popular support. Yet this similarity has a tragic dimension that was highlighted by Mahmoud Riyad, a former Egyptian foreign minister and secretary general of the Arab League. Manifesting itself in the insulting reception with which Egyptian migrant workers were met in Jordan while fleeing Kuwait and Iraq to their homeland, this is the first time a division in the Arab world takes place at the popular level.

These countries share another similarity: economic considerations underlie both Egypt's strong support of the American role in the Gulf and Jordan's reluctance to condemn Iraq. Both countries have been suffering from severe economic problems whose disastrous consequences have been halted only by foreign aid, namely the \$2.3 billion in U.S. aid to Egypt and Jordan's trade with Iraq, amounting to 40 percent of its total. Jordan is almost totally dependent on oil imports from Iraq at below the market price.

Egypt's economic problems, wrote Tony Walker in the London-based *Middle East Economic Digest*, are "almost too numerous to catalogue." Egypt's foreign debt is \$50 billion; half of its food is imported; 7 percent of its labor force in 1988 (or half a million) are under 12 years old; and much of the agrarian reforms of the '60s have been rolled back, thus favoring the upper middle classes and leaving 70 percent of farming families living below the poverty line.

The Egyptian leadership has sought

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait has rearranged the relationships among Arab states and split the three blocs that had developed in the years following World War II. Mideast reactions to the invasion reflect the new alignment.

short-term political remedies for deep social and economic problems. Earlier, under the presidency of Anwar el-Sadat, Egypt offered its services to the U.S. as a regional policeman and was willing to provide military facilities. These policies continue under President Hosni Mubarak. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Egypt was once again willing to buy off its economic problems by political means. As the most populous Arab country (54.1 million people), and with the largest Arab military machine after Iraq, it sent 14,000 soldiers to the defense of Saudi Arabia. As expected, the White House asked Congress to write off Egypt's \$7 billion military debt, and Saudi Arabia promised at least \$800 million in economic aid.

The Jordanian counterpart: Few people in the Arab world take King Hussein's rhetoric seriously, yet, surprisingly, some Palestinians do. The king's "Machiavelianism"—actually his cunning and conniving—amount to an ability to sell himself to the highest bidder, to the powers that could secure his throne. King Hussein's journey of alliances goes back to the days of British domination, then to the Nasserites during the '50s, back to the British, then to Nasser again, and finally to a different kind of alliance with the Americans, who—in collaboration with the Israelis—contributed significantly to his survival in 1970. Shifting

gears to Saddam Hussein in 1990 is a surprise, but given the stakes—the viability of the Jordanian economy—one need not be amazed.

Jordan almost reached the brink of famine two years ago, causing price riots in April 1989. These riots—led by leftists and Islamicists—later forced the king to void the law of "combating Communism" and allow a free election. They were directed at the government's compliance with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to pay its \$8 billion foreign debt. In the past, the Jordanian economy was kept afloat by aid from the Gulf states, whose wealth the king suddenly wanted to "distribute" to the have-nots, and by Western aid, primarily from Britain and the U.S.

Other Jordanian sources of revenue include trade, a sizable part of which is conducted with Iraq (it consists of agricultural and light industrial products), and remittances sent by Jordanian migrant workers in the Gulf (the country's only source of foreign exchange). Deteriorating economic conditions caused a drastic drop in Jordanian living standards.

The king himself does not deny the link between Jordan's economic problems and its pro-Iraqi policy. But instead of admitting that his country was dissatisfied with the amounts of aid from the Gulf states and that this frustration led him to support Saddam Hussein, the king and his entourage offered the argument that the sanctions would harm Jordan more than Iraq.

When the Saudis faced him in the Arab summit conference and told him of their willingness to help him if his reluctance to condemn Iraq is economic, King Hussein argued that cutting the size of Iraq's military machine would not serve the Palestinian cause and would make Israel even more intransigent, since Iraq would cease to exist as a credible deterrent.

Palestinian frustrations, which were manifest in popular demonstrations in Jordan and the West Bank, are genuine. It is hard to imagine the Palestinians siding with the coalition against Iraq, since the U.S., the leader of this coalition, has just severed its contact with them and seems increasingly inattentive to their plight. For King Hussein, today the Palestinians bestow a moral legitimacy on the Jordanian policy, a legitimacy that reached its zenith when the leaders of the two Marxist factions (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) of the PLO were received by the king.

Like Mubarak of Egypt, King Hussein opted for exclusively political solutions to solve economic problems.

If Egypt and Jordan are similar in certain respects, Syria and Sudan resemble each other in the authoritarian nature of their regimes. Foreign-policy decisions in both are made at the top, with little input from democratic institutions. But the factors crucial in the Syrian and Sudanese decisions

toward the Iraqi invasion are distinct. Syria, which opposes Hussein's invasion, is influenced by its 20-year rivalry with Iraq, while Sudan, which supports the Iraqis, has civil war in the south on its mind. Its fundamentalist and dictatorial junta needs friends and material assistance.

Syria's economic problems are also severe, ranging from lack of hard currency, low productivity and an inefficient public sector (see *In These Times*, Sept. 12). Syria has been a major recipient of Gulf aid, and it was more than coincidence when Saudi Arabia approved \$500 million for Syria as a means to boost its shattered economy. Yet Syria's siding with Saudi Arabia and its sending 12,000 soldiers and 270 tanks for the defense of the kingdom cannot be explained by economic factors alone.

While Syria's Hafez al-Assad is willing to provide military and political assistance for the right price, not all services are for sale. The survival of the Baathist regime cannot be traded, since that would be suicide. In defending their regime in the past, Syrian leaders went to unprecedented extremes. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, Syria supported "Persian" Iran against Arab Iraq, never mind that the Iraqis are ruled by a different faction of the same party. When Arafat and his PLO tried to escape Syrian influence over their decision-making, Assad launched relentless war against him in Lebanon. When Lebanese Moslems and a coalition of leftists—including some of Assad's own party—came close to seizing power in Lebanon in 1975, he robbed them of their victory. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, Syria was quite willing to assist Saudi Arabia and the U.S. to accomplish their goals. Each of the aforementioned policies neither enjoyed popular support in Syria nor was considered consistent with either Baathist or pan-Arabist ideology.

While the factors underlying Syria's support of Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are rather complex, those behind Sudan's support of Hussein are straightforward: the Sudanese policy is strictly based on regime maintenance. Sudan, which is ruled by a military junta, is isolated regionally and internationally. In the Iraqi invasion it found an opportunity to gain recognition and assistance for its inhuman civil war against the non-Arab and non-Moslem south.

Myth of popular support: The notion that the Arab "masses" support Hussein seems to have gained credibility from the scattered demonstrations in Sudan in support of the Iraqi regime. In fact, these were orchestrated by the dictator Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who 15 months ago overthrew the democratically elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi, and who rules with the support of a Moslem fundamentalist militia (Jabhat al-Qawmiyya al-Islamiyya). Al-Bashir intends to continue the legacy of former dictator Gaafar al-Numeiri by building a narrow religious Islamic state and imposing its laws on the south, which is 95 percent animist, 5 percent Christian.

Sudan's economic problems are immense when compared with those of Syria, and even Egypt. As recently as October 5, a press report indicated that Sudan is on its way to the worst famine in six years. Two years ago famine claimed 250,000 lives. As a result of the ongoing civil war, 2 million people fled the fighting and settled on the outskirts of the capital, Khartoum. Refugees

die daily in the most inhuman conditions. The al-Bashir government and its Moslem fundamentalist supporters have sabotaged both a solution to the war and the channeling of aid to those threatened with starvation.

They overthrew the Sadiq al-Mahdi government simply because it reached an agreement with Sudan's Peoples Liberation Army to build a secular and democratic state as a substitute for the fundamentalist state laid down by Numeiri in 1983. And in order to win the war against the south, they prevented food shipments from reaching that region, thus inviting the U.S., West Germany and Britain to halt food shipments.

Absurd as it may seem, the Sudanese dictator appears to have hoped that a victorious Iraq would help him defeat the southern resistance. And incredible as it is, an October 5 *New York Times* report indicates that Western officials "suspected that the [Sudanese] government had traded up to 300,000 tons of sorghum, the basic food staple, with Libya and Iraq in exchange for war materiel this year."

A third group of Arab states—Algeria, Tunisia and Yemen (including South and North Yemen, which were united into one state May 22)—have relatively liberalized their political processes. While they do not approve of the invasion and the annexation of Kuwait, they either abstained from condemnation or showed some reservations about sending troops to the defense of the Saudi kingdom, as well as accepting a U.S. military presence in the Arabian Peninsula.

There were pro-Iraqi demonstrations in Algeria, Tunisia and Yemen. Generally speaking, 200 million predominantly poor Arab people sympathize with enemies of the super-rich classes of the Gulf. But Arab states' foreign policies rarely derive from popular sentiment. Algerian, Tunisian and Yemeni positions appear to be influenced by more specific factors, two of which can be identified: the recent process of democratization in these societies, which paved the way for a diverse public opinion; and the vulnerable domestic positions of these states, which force them to outbid their domestic opponents by either embracing the opposition's platform or by taking more extreme positions. Thus, they ended up jumping on the bandwagon of Hussein's "Arabism" and Islamism almost inadvertently.

The Algeria position is a case in point. As in most Arab countries, Islamicist movements are not monolithic. While all proclaim allegiance to Islam, their political practice varies from one state to another. Moslem brethren in Jordan had been allies with the king and enjoyed his protection for some time; those in Egypt had been at odds with the state for more than four decades. Islamicists in Algeria, however, have great affinity to Saudi Arabia. The Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which recently scored an important victory over the ruling National Liberation Front (NLF) (see *In These Times*, Aug. 12), took a pro-Saudi position due to the close financial links with Saudi Arabia. The NLF saw the chance, therefore, to refurbish its nationalist and "anti-imperialist" credentials at the expense of the FIS by refusing to join the Saudi-American coalition.

The Tunisian case illustrates a different

tendency: the state, despite a set of political and social reforms, remains vulnerable and thus attempts to strengthen itself by preempting the opposition and endorsing its platform.

Breaking away: This is exactly what Zein Al-Abdine Ben Ali, Tunisia's president, did after overthrowing in 1987 Habib Bourguiba, the country's senile president for life. On one hand, Ben Ali released political prisoners, abolished the infamous state-security court, allowed Islamic fundamentalists and other opposition groups to work more freely and introduced a new constitution that abolished the president's right to hold office for life. But he also broke away from Tunisia's well-established tradition of secularism by invoking "Allah the compassionate and merciful" to justify his coup d'état, and he went even further by having himself filmed at prayer in mosques and making a pilgrimage to Mecca.

When the elections took place on April 2, 1989, Ben Ali's party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally, emerged with a strong majority, 99.3 percent of the 2.1 million votes cast. Still, the legacy of Bourguiba—corruption, repression and a whole array of social and economic problems—remains unresolved. Ben Ali's decision to abstain from the vote to condemn Hussein for his invasion surprised many observers but can be seen as part of his strategy since 1987. His position on the Gulf crisis has little to do with nationalistic and anti-Western sentiment and more with a cynical attempt to defuse domestic discontent and pull the rug out from under the reformist Islamic Ten-

dency Movement.

Yemen's abstention can be understood in the strained relationship between today's Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Unlike the popularized image painted of Saudi Arabia by its public-relations agents in the U.S. and Europe, Saudi Arabia often paid little respect to the sovereignty of its neighbors. The Saudis had a border dispute with former North Yemen that culminated in border skirmishes and Saudi attempts to buy the allegiance of some tribal chiefs. The Saudis also used their great fortune to found a spy network and train mercenaries for acts of sabotage against formerly socialist South Yemen. As recently as this year, the Saudis showed their displeasure with Yemeni unity—especially for its multiparty system and representative institutions—by supporting Islamicist groups who waged a relentless campaign against the two Yemens on the grounds that integrating with the south's "Marxist" and "atheist" views would pose a threat to Islamic traditions.

Saudi Arabia also may have played a role in aborting Kuwait's dynamic experiment with parliamentarianism (1963-76, 1981-86). These sources indicate that Saudi pres-

sure was applied even this year, when the Kuwaiti government was in the midst of a struggle with the opposition on the future of its parliament. It was said that the Saudis criticized the reluctance of the Kuwaiti government to crack down on the *diwaniyyaa* (popular political meetings in private homes), primarily because these activities were feared by Saudi Arabia's rulers.

Instability in the Middle East is caused by a multiplicity of factors. The Israeli-Palestinian dispute is one, and nothing better illustrates this than the recent killings in Jerusalem, which Iraq has tried to exploit. But Middle Eastern conflicts cannot be dealt with by mere "remote control" diplomacy from Washington.

The solutions do not lie in more arms sales and regional defense arrangements, a legacy of the Cold War era. These policies serve U.S. military industries, not poor Arab countries. They take away resources desperately needed for regional development and a truly just and new "world order."

Elie Chalala teaches Mideast history at Santa Monica City College.

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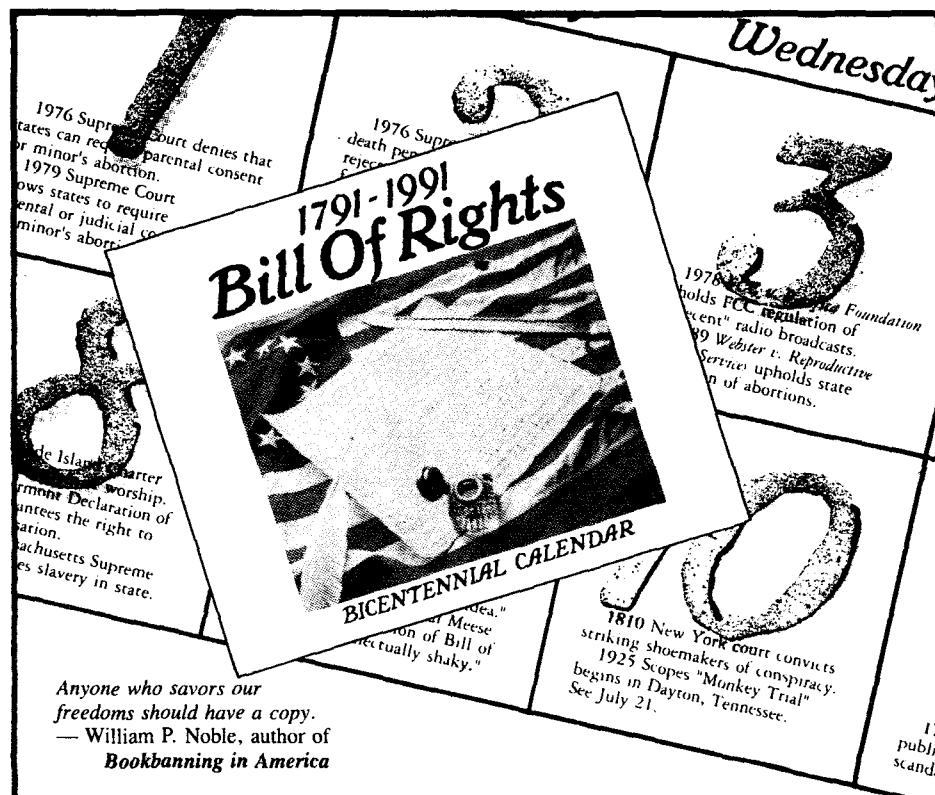
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IN THESE TIMES

Grounded: Frank Lorenzo and the Destruction of Eastern Airlines

By Aaron Bernstein
Simon and Schuster
256 pp., \$19.95

By Osha Gray Davidson

Capital takes flight as Frank Lorenzo makes a cash landing

history of the airline industry."

The empire strikes out: Lorenzo's empire—made up of Continental, Texas Air and Eastern—lay in shambles. In one nationwide study, consumers rated Continental as the worst company of any kind in America. Texas Air lost over \$1.6 billion in the last two years of the '80s alone (each year a record loss in the industry).

The sordid tale of what Lorenzo did to Eastern Airlines, the jewel in his crown, takes center stage in Bernstein's timely and important book.

One of this country's oldest airlines, Eastern began in the '20s carrying mail between New York and Miami in a fleet of eight single-engine open-cockpit biplanes. Within a decade, the company discovered that there was big money to be made ferrying vacationers between the two cities (Eastern hawked their flights with the radio jingle: "From frost to flowers in 14 hours").

Under the leadership of World War I flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker, Eastern quickly became one of the four early major U.S. airlines (along with United, American and TWA). But the company's labor troubles also started early and grew right

along with the airline. By the time former astronaut Frank Borman took over the reins in 1975, Eastern had a long history of labor disputes, fights that intensified under Borman.

Borman caused many of the problems by trying to run the airline as if it were a military operation ("I give the orders. You follow them"). But, points out Bernstein, there were also thorny economic issues at work as well. For example, Eastern was weighted down with excessive debt, and after deregulation the company was forced to lower fares in order to keep passengers from going to cut-rate airlines. These factors cut heavily into Eastern's profits.

Rank-and-file rancor: Borman tried to save money primarily by cutting wages, a tactic that, predictably, resulted in heated and protracted labor-management battles, especially with Eastern's well-paid and generally militant machinists union members, headed by a tough negotiator named Charlie Bryan. Borman and Bryan could agree on almost nothing. In the midst of a particularly rancorous contract dispute in 1986 (this time involving all three of Eastern's major unions: machinists, pilots and flight attendants), Borman played his trump card: if the

unions didn't give in to his demands, Eastern would be sold to Frank Lorenzo.

Lorenzo's hardball tactics had already made him one of labor's chief bogeymen. Workers remembered all too well that Lorenzo had taken Continental into bankruptcy, torn up labor contracts, halved employees' wages and crushed the unions.

Borman had never really planned on selling Eastern to Lorenzo; he had thought the mere threat of the sale would be enough to send the unions scurrying for cover. But Borman misjudged the unions, and after he had opened this Pandora's box, Frank Lorenzo would not be stuffed back inside. In a flash, Lorenzo put together a deal and rammed it through Eastern's board. As Bernstein writes about the fateful bargain:

Lorenzo offered a mere \$615 million for the entire carrier. Moreover, only \$256 million would come from Texas Air [Lorenzo's holding company]. The remainder would come from Eastern itself: \$231 million from a new preferred stock that Eastern would issue; \$108 million in cash that Eastern would reimburse to Texas Air; and the \$20 million "inducement fee" that Eastern would pay Texas Air for the privilege of being pur-

chased by Lorenzo. Texas Air would take over a carrier nearly three times its size for little more than peanuts.

Once in the pilot's seat, Lorenzo quickly went to work on the unions, blaming the "exorbitant wages" earned by Eastern employees for all the company's problems and demanding hefty concessions. But high wages were not among the airline's most pressing problems. Union pilots and airline attendants had already accepted a 20 percent wage cut (on the night Eastern was sold), and the carrier ranked fourth in the industry in regard to labor expenses. The unions were taking the fall for a panoply of problems, including a history of poor management decisions that, together with the effects of deregulation, had gotten Eastern into trouble.

Lorenzo's looting: Reading the remainder of *Grounded* is like watching a videotape of an air disaster run in slow motion. Bernstein has done an admirable job of charting the airline's downward trajectory as Lorenzo stripped the company of asset after asset, looting Eastern of some \$750 million in resources as it hurtled toward insolvency.

In the end, a federal bankruptcy judge took the airline away from Lorenzo—but only after he had effectively bled it dry and laid off nearly 42,000 workers in the process.

Bernstein lays most of the blame for Eastern's destruction on Lorenzo's doorstep, but he clearly feels others share responsibility for the debacle. The staunchly pro-management bankruptcy judge, Burton R. Lifland, allowed Lorenzo to get away with financial murder before taking action. Drexel Burnham Lambert, which supplied much of the money Lorenzo used to build his empire, is not blameless either. And President George Bush comes off looking less-than-statesmanlike for his role in the affair. Bush lent Lorenzo support in his union-busting efforts (ignoring the possible effect on the airline), in an attempt to duplicate Ronald Reagan's highly successful—from a political standpoint—victory over the air traffic controllers' union in 1981.

While Bernstein doesn't provide the rich character development found in *Barbarians at the Gate*, the best-selling chronicle of the fight for RJR-Nabisco, *Grounded* does provide a far better analysis of the political issues involved.

One can only hope that CEOs take to heart Bernstein's conclusion that "confrontation is not the path to success" in the 1990s—perhaps the most important lesson of Eastern's sad affair.

Osha Gray Davidson is the author of *Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto* (Free Press). He is currently at work on a book about leveraged buyouts.



The Politics of Illusion: Republicanism and Socialism in Modern Ireland

By Henry Patterson
W.W. Norton, 248 pp., \$25.00

The British State & The Ulster Crisis: From Wilson to Thatcher

By Paul Bew and Henry Patterson
Routledge, Chapman & Hall
154 pp., \$9.95

The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72: Political Forces and Social Classes

By Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson
St. Martin's Press (1979)
231 pp., out of print

Marxist Perspectives in Northern Ireland

Science & Society (special issue)
Vol. 53, No. 2
Edited by Ellen Hazelkorn
Guilford Publications, 120 pp. \$6.00

By Wim Roefs

NORTHERN IRISH POLITICAL SCIENTIST Henry Patterson's long overdue book should educate, among others, the left (socialist and otherwise) in Great Britain, Europe and the U.S. *The Politics of Illusion: Republicanism and Socialism in Modern Ireland* analyzes the many attempts since 1921 of, as Patterson calls them, "social republicans" in Ireland to combine purist Irish nationalism with socialist politics. These attempts were, above all, full of contradictions in terms of ends and means. The latest, and perhaps last, attempt is the Provisional IRA and its political wing, Provisional Sinn Féin.

Patterson's analysis of the republican movement is merciless and void of the sentiment and nationalistic romanticism that often characterizes leftist writings on Northern Ireland. *The Politics of Illusion* fits into a series of books by Patterson and fellow socialist Paul Bew. Their research is unpopular among most of the left, which has linked itself in a politically and intellectually lazy way to the slogans of Irish nationalism, including those of the Provisionals.

Many on the left claim to be "critical supporters" of Irish republicanism, but their "critical attitude" doesn't prevent them from ignoring a vast body of left-wing revisionist analysis on Ireland, of which the "Marxist Perspectives on Ireland" special issue of *Science & Society* (Summer 1989) gives some good examples. Bew and Patterson's work is part of the revisionist trend. Although the style of their writing and the organization of their material is frequently rather sloppy, nobody interested in Northern Ireland should ignore these analyses.

Historical recap: In 1921, the partition of Ireland made the south independent, while Northern Ireland was established for the Protestants who wanted to stay within the United Kingdom. All over Ireland, the IRA remained actively opposed to the settlement but increasingly found it

Political openings and Irish schisms



Northern Ireland: exploring the contradictions of economic and ideological poverty.

self in the margins of Irish politics. From the '20s to the present, the organization has tried to compensate for the defeat of purely militarist and politically backward republicanism by taking up social and economic issues. In doing so, the IRA or its political wing, Sinn Féin, tried to create a mass movement for the "anti-imperialist struggle" against the British presence in Ireland. Patterson writes that the working class "was significant as a resource to be mobilized behind a pre-existing objective," the unification of Ireland.

This instrumental approach to "socialism" and social agitation created severe problems for the social republicans. First of all, they got in trouble when taking their social agenda seriously; the struggle for a united Ireland, particularly the IRA's violent campaigns, interfered with their capability to attract broad support. They never considered, however, that the real needs of the masses might not be compatible with the republican objective.

Secondly, their traditional Irish nationalist perceptions and their fixation on uniting Ireland resulted in a severely distorted view of Irish political realities. They overestimated the chances for the creation of a broad social movement and the possibilities for Irish unification.

The present republican movement is an example of this. By the mid-'70s, the Provisional leadership took up social issues to build a broad movement that would support the

IRA's armed struggle for unification. Yet despite existing strong national sentiments, "an organization which sought to link economic and any other domestic issue to support for the 'armed struggle' [in the North] was doomed to perpetual marginality in the Republic," Patterson concludes.

In the North, the Provisionals did create a successful movement during the '80s, but the contradictions

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of social republicanism are felt there as well. IRA violence prevents Sinn Féin from making progress beyond the present support of 11 percent of the total electorate. Furthermore, the party's rallying call for jobs is offset by IRA violence, which might jeopardize investments. It contrasts even more with the IRA's bombing of "economic targets," which destroys jobs.

Sinn Féin's instrumental approach

The instrumental approach to "socialism" and social agitation created severe problems for the social republicans.

to "socialism" is also reflected in the opportunistic way the party refers to it. In the early '80s, a confident republican movement seeking the support of the British left emphasized the struggle for a socialist united Ireland. By the end of the decade, however, a stagnating movement pursued cooperation with conservative Irish nationalist parties, insisting that "socialism" was not on the agenda.

Patterson argues that the basis for the Provisionals' support is not the old slogan of "completing the national revolution" but the fact that they give "a bitter ... expression to real needs" of the Catholic population. Therefore, if these needs would be seriously addressed by a British government, "social republicanism" would be consigned to the history books.

In *The British State & The Ulster Crisis*, Patterson and Bew argue that substantial state-sponsored reforms, particularly an economic face-lift, could well be the key to some sort of decent settlement in Northern Ireland. Bew and Patterson have been accused of 'Marxist economism' in expecting economic reforms to ease nationalist feelings. Yet nobody expects economic reforms to do away with Irish nationalism, nor that they are an instant solution. The argument is that happy Catholics are less likely to make the nationalist cause their top priority, which in turn would make Northern Ireland a less explosive and polarized community.

In this respect it should be remembered that the present Catholic revolt started 20 years ago as a civil-rights movement, not as a nationalist movement. Decent political and economic reforms in the past might well have prevented the mess of the last two decades. Whatever the outcome of substantial economic reforms now, the bottom line is that any settlement is unlikely as long as the unemployment rate among Catholics is twice as high as among Protestants.

One of the most powerful dogmas of Irish republicanism in the last two decades goes against the argument of reforming Northern Ireland. Unlike the social republicans of the IRA in the '60s who tried to reform Northern Ireland as part of their strategy to create a socialist united Ireland, the Provisionals claim that Northern Ireland will be irreformable as long as partition exists, because Northern Catholics will suffer severe discrimination. After 50 years of structural, state-sponsored discrimination, the failure of the '60s civil-rights movement to win substantial reforms from the Protestant regime was seen as the ultimate "proof" of this notion.

The Protestants are seen by republicans as one monolithic reactionary bloc who have always been unwilling to compromise. Since it was the British presence in the North that gave the Republicans the power, British presence is said to be the key problem. The fact that the British

Continued on following page

Continued from preceding page

didn't manage to abandon discrimination after they put Northern Ireland under direct rule from London in 1972 is supposed to be further evidence for that.

With the anti-imperialist flavor of Irish nationalism and the justified concern for the battered Northern Catholics, this dogma is the most important reason why many on the left give uncritical support to Irish nationalism in general and not seldom to the Provisionals specifically. But the only thing Northern Ireland's history proves is that it hasn't been reformed, not that it can't be reformed. In *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-1972*, Bew and Patterson, with Peter Gibbon, argued that the Protestant bloc was not monolithic. They show that at any time in the country's history, important sec-

tions of the Protestant political elite demanded. "British standards" for Northern Ireland, which included equality for Catholics.

British reserve and reserves: Because British policy was dominated by the hope of avoiding getting bogged down in Northern Ireland's affairs, the British failed to support the reform-minded section of the Protestant ruling class. In *The British State & The Ulster Crisis*, Bew and Patterson can thus argue that "the problem of the involvement of the British state in Northern Ireland lies not in its existence but in its specific forms."

Bew and Patterson show that the British longtime unwillingness to get involved made them grossly unprepared to act when all hell broke loose in the late '60s.

Since 1972, British reluctance has

translated into a policy that exacerbated the Northern crisis. The steady sectarian violence by Catholic and Protestant paramilitaries and the resulting political and communal polarization obviously hasn't enhanced the chances for a democratic settlement.

The real problem with Britain is not its presence but the ambiguity of that presence: it can't leave but doesn't want to be there. Great Britain has no economic incentive to stay, since their involvement costs them a bundle. Northern Ireland's supposed strategic importance to NATO—another popular argument among republicans and their supporters—is most certainly nonsense as well. The truth is that the British Labour Party is in favor of reunification of Ireland and that the Conservative government agrees that unity

can come about by consent, if the Northern Protestants agree to it. The real reason why the British are in Northern Ireland is, as Bew and Patterson argue, "the near impossibility of expelling a million citizens [the Northern Protestants] from the United Kingdom—especially in response to a campaign of terrorism."

Britain's limited commitment to Northern Ireland, in combination with Thatcherite monetarism, has so far been the luck of the Provisionals. The Thatcher government isn't prepared to deliver the funds to deal with Catholic needs and thus keep social republicanism alive. Patterson argues that the future of social republicanism and of the Provisionals' substantial support in the North is "sympiotically tied to the future of the Thatcherite project."

Perhaps it is some consolation to

the left that the arguments presented here are not so much arguments for or against Irish nationalism or Protestant unionism. These are arguments for addressing the real needs and problems in Northern Ireland. The progressive position on Northern Ireland is neither support nor opposition for one faction there but rather to promote practical politics that create equality, peace and reconciliation. The constitutional context—Irish or British—within which this happens should be of no great concern for the left or anybody else who is interested in these things. Creating the social context that is most likely to fulfill these goals is the task at hand.

Wim Roefs is a Dutch writer specializing in Northern Ireland. He is co-author of *Verdeeld Belfast* (Divided Belfast).

Stalemate saga anything but stale

The Wild Colonial Boy

By James Hynes
Atheneum, 356 pp., \$18.95

By James North

THIS FIRST NOVEL, A POLITICAL tale of contemporary Ireland, gets much stronger toward the end. Early on, the pacing is a bit too slow. But the ending gathers force suddenly and surprisingly, like a thunderstorm at the end of a balmy, mellow day, sweeping the reader through emotions that are unexpectedly shocking and deep.

The story begins when Brian Donovan of Detroit, whose grandfather fled Northern Ireland in the '20s for political reasons, is asked by his family to illegally deliver \$10,000 in cash to the Provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army. Brian is a confused, spoiled young man who has not earned the right to the cynicism he affects. He is in contrast with the Irish cousins he meets for the first time on his arrival, who are seri-

ous about ousting the British from the North and reunifying the island.

Through one cousin, Maire, Brian stumbles into a subplot within the IRA. A renegade Provo, Jimmy Duggan, plans a violent attack designed to embarrass the organization's leadership into ending its first tentative forays into participating in electoral politics. The aimless and somewhat weak-minded Brian is the per-

IRELAND

fect mule to carry plastic explosives across borders.

Hynes has a good ear for dialogue and an impressive talent for description, whether he is rendering the red-brick grittiness in Belfast or the wild Donegal seacoast. But he devotes too much time to the comings and goings of the participants instead of showing us what motivates them. Jimmy Duggan and Maire come off as fairly standard fanatics, motivated almost exclusively by revenge. People do get to be that way, but that's

not how they start life.

Midway through, Hynes introduces an unlikeable, well-drawn new character, an American Irish freelance journalist named Tim McGuire. Tim is a putative left-winger whose Irish nationalist sympathies clash with his desire to get the big scoop.

Art imitates: Any left-wing journalist who has worked overseas will instantly recognize this scene. One afternoon, Tim comes into the hall of his low-rent Belfast boarding house and looks for his mail: "The only thing for him was a letter from his mother in Boston. No check from *In These Times*, no check from the *Voice*, no answer from his *Mother Jones* query letter. He scowled and pushed his mother's letter into the pocket of his parka and started heavily up the stairs. What those wire service jerks in the Europa didn't realize, *couldn't* realize, since they never left the fucking bar, did they, didn't have Tim's contacts or years of experience on the ground, Belfast was just another Beirut or Managua to them, with less exotic food—was that there was some kind of unusual seismic activity in the Provos."

The story begins to move at a gripping pace. Brian is down in Dublin, continuing his clandestine journey. As he walks the Dublin streets, he notices the signs of American mass

culture, which are so ubiquitous overseas and so depressing. He muses: "Heroes were for movies. The methodical Provos got results, while his grandfather's self-defeating, hand-me-down nationalism had nothing to show for itself but some heroic statuary and a lot of weepy folk songs. In the end they had lost the war not to the British or the Orangemen but to last summer's American blockbusters and the flame-broiled hamburger."

Brian Donovan continues passively on his mission. Hynes is deft at gradually adding darker shading to what started out sounding like a lighthearted, half-whimsical caper. He is strong on suspense, without stumbling into melodrama. A brutal interrogation scene near the end is sketched with particular skill, as the

victim slides in and out of consciousness. We get to the horrifying finale with complete, deep conviction.

Yet Hynes' protagonists never face real dilemmas, never stop to ponder alternatives in the way that can bring drama and power to a novel. (For example, in Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*, will the scientist-prisoners win their own freedom by developing a device that will enable Stalin's secret police to identify telephone voices?) Hynes' characters continue to travel grimly down paths that seem to have been laid out for them. But maybe the stalemate in Ireland makes change seem inconceivable, whether on a political level or in individual lives.

James North, author of *Freedom Rising*, is a former correspondent for *In These Times*.

NOTEBOOK

The Carlos Chadwick Mystery

By Gene H. Bell-Villada
Armador Publishers (Box 12335,
Albuquerque, NM 87195)
255 pp., \$9.00

The center cannot hold in *The Carlos Chadwick Mystery*, a political parable of campus life and corporate America. But that's only because the political center seems to be a dubious and tawdry fiction. This is, however, a criticism not of author Gene Bell-Villada's active imagination but of the reality he satirizes. Indeed, the invisible ideology of journalistic objectivity serves as the all-purpose whipping boy for this broadly comic tale.

Romanticism and disillusionment await idealistic young Carlos "Charlie" Chadwick as he makes his way from a sleepy childhood in Caracas to a sleepy New England college—where he ultimately becomes the prime suspect in a campus bombing. The book is divided into three parts. The first canto lays out the prosaic facts of Charlie's life in the form of a mainstream magazine article, encumbered by all the excess baggage of that arena's bogus "balance." The sec-

ond part is a "personal memoir" penned by a narcissistic coed and budding "liberal" journalist who has her own ax to grind—and doesn't mind who she grinds it on. After a brief affair, she cuts Chadwick loose and sends him skidding toward giddy Marxism.

The third section is Chadwick's one-act play, *Perspectives Industries Ltd.*, a heavy-handed swipe at liberal education's marketplace of ideas. In Chadwick's sardonic scenario, all ideas are "value-free"—the industrialists of PIL will peddle pro or con on anything (Hitler, slavery, Marxism, what have you). It just so happens that some ideas are more popular/profitable than others.

Each of the novel's three sections has its carefully crafted myopia, but some of the blind spots are more telling than others. Bell-Villada clearly has sympathy for his reasonable fanatic Carlos but none for the raving moderates who surround him. The author has nevertheless done a fine job of caricaturing those complacent collegians who don't realize that ideology is as intertwined with college life as ivy is to the walls.

—Jeff Reid



IN THE ARTS

By Pat Aufderheide

THE VCR OFFERS, ESPECIALLY FOR those who can interest their school, university or church in cassette purchases, a widening of the spectrum of opinion, image and vision from anything broadcast TV or cable presently delivers. The following is a sampler of recent releases on video.

Dance of Hope. This 75-minute documentary explores tensions

VIDEO

within Pinochet's Chile, mostly from the point of view of the poor and anti-Pinochet. Directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Deborah Shaffer (*Witness to War: Dr. Charlie Clements*), *Dance of Hope* won a 1989 Festival of New Latin American Cinema award in Havana for best documentary. It revolves around the 1988 plebiscite that resulted in a 58 percent vote against Pinochet and precipitated elections.

There are many moving moments, as relatives of the disappeared describe their ongoing struggle to recover information and bodies, as church volunteers demonstrate self-help programs in the poor neighborhoods and as relatives of the disappeared dance the *cueca sola*, a pointedly one-person version of a traditional dance. The film also features repetitive scenes of police breaking up anti-Pinochet demonstrations.

Interviews with a small-town pro-Pinochet mayor provide a glimpse of the other side, the mayor's upper-class grooming and smooth denial of conflict damning her own perspective; confrontations between pro and anti-Pinochet groups add color to the picture. While not hiding its political sympathies, the video substitutes music, atmospheric shots and lengthy scenes of demonstrations for open moralizing. Available from First Run/Acarus Films, 153 Waverly Place, 5th flr., New York, NY 10014, (212) 727-1711.

Buy Me That. A rare example of critical media about media, this short (28-minute) documentary dissecting commercials for grade-school kids is lively, informative and limited. The ingratiating host explains to kids the deceptions of toy commercials, with examples (which, unfortunately, fascinate more than the explanations), and children try—and fail—to duplicate the tricks shown on the air. The video's strength is the kids; one wishes more had been done with stop-frame and replay, to demonstrate just how images turn into a picture of reality. Produced by Consumers Union and HBO, available for institutional users from Films Incorporated Video, 5547 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640, (800) 323-4222, ext. 43.

Knowing Her Place. "It takes a long time to figure out where you belong," begins this disturbing, thoughtful 40-minute documentary



A Bay Area '60s protest: agitating for peace, free speech and other un-American activities.

World enough and time for videos with a sense of place

on an East Indian-American woman's experience of biculturalism—or, as she experiences it, "cultural schizophrenia." Filmmaker Indu Krishnan's personal narration leads the viewer into Vasu's life story, which concerns not only cross-cultural experience but also dysfunctional family dynamics and the roles of women. Vasu grew up in the U.S., moved to India and married as a teenager, then returned as subservient wife and also aspiring professional woman. Interviews begin just before she attempts suicide and resume as she and her family come to terms with what her two sons and her husband have simply denied.

Vasu's own attitudes, revealed in sensitively conducted and expertly edited (by Scott Sinkler) interviews, reveal both identity problems typical of the plight of the person between cultures and also a complex, reflective individual. Devastating are interviews with her nonchalant husband and her two dismissive sons and family scenes—including her extended family in India.

The film's focus stays on cross-cultural questions, but the lesser-explored material on male-female dynamics—what is said vs. what is heard, the denial of emotional reality, the joint assumption of invidious power relationships—and on mother-daughter relations is rich and provocative. Available from Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012, (212) 925-0606.

Berkeley in the Sixties. A fascinating historical documentary on social movements of the '60s and early '70s, seen from the vantage point of Berkeley, Calif. What might seem a provincial perspective becomes, in the hands of filmmaker Mark Kitchell, a charting of a national movement, its regional idiosyncrasies maintained without losing the sense of a larger whole. Its characters range from Free Speech Movement leader Mario Savio to Joan Baez, Allen Ginsberg, Bobby Seale and LBJ.

The film, partly sponsored by the public TV series *P.O.V.*, is divided into three parts: "Confronting the University" (taking the free-speech movement into civil rights); "Confronting America" (the anti-Vietnam War movement); and "Confronting History" (black nationalism, the women's movement, hippies and yuppies). Interviewees represent differing approaches to the opportunities and challenges of the time: evolving militancy, working within the system, self-discovery.

Kitchell's insights are woven into the often-fascinating footage, and if they are anything but fond, they are also illuminating and refreshing. He describes the awakening of middle-class students to a sense of themselves as an oppressed class (helped along by the House Un-American Activities Committee), along with an often self-important idealism and discovery of brutal political realities.

He grounds the anti-war movement in its origins opposing what had been a "consensus war" and recovers telling footage of then-gubernatorial candidate Ronald Reagan, who played on hostility to the burgeoning student movement.

The perilous passage of the anti-war movement from protest to resistance, with increased militancy going hand in hand with polarization and marginalization, has a terrifying drama. It also has the poignancy of one movement veteran, who says that activists increasingly saw themselves as "glue in the keyholes" rather than as agents of fundamental change.

The most complex segment is that last, in which differences among activist groups become yawning strategic gaps and targeted reform fails to generalize into an overarching mission for social change. White fascination with black power in particular comes in for powerful indictment.

It's impossible for a veteran of the

Couch potatoes and grouch potatoes: exploring three continents and four or five worlds on video.

era to watch *Berkeley in the Sixties* without finding lacunae and differing with interpretations. Feminists, for instance, will object to the film's limited coverage and analysis of the women's movement, and the national civil-rights movement, especially in the South, gets short shrift. Although the film lends a coherence, in retrospect, to a tangled and explosive history, the judgment of one philosophy professor that the collection of movements lacked an overarching vision and thus became a "series of emotional moments" rings true to the viewer's experience of Kitchell's history. And yet, some objectives were won.

Kitchell's long search for film footage paid off in vivid, tightly edited (by Veronica Selver) and targeted scenes that transmit the energy of the moment and the conflicts that mobilized young people. The context is set so well, in fact, that it's possible to read through the pictures the differing viewpoints of the many interviewees. Although there are villains in the piece—particularly University of California President Clark Kerr—they are few.

Most of all, the film recalls the hard-won discovery of what political battles are fought about. In the process, what is also discovered is a near-bottomless well of naiveté and idealism about what politics ought to be, a well to which activists return time and again with each escalation of conflict.

A film festival hit and widely seen in theatrical distribution this autumn (with bookings into the winter), *Berkeley in the Sixties* is also available from California Newsreel, 149 9th St., #420, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 621-6196, and will air on *P.O.V.* next season. ■

Nicaragua

Continued from page 13

AID in its general outlook and the Chamorro government is similar in orientation to the conservative regimes that have come to power in the past few years in many Latin American countries. Its concept of a "social market economy" includes a broad privatization process, fiscal austerity, deregulation and liberalization.

The difference is in the pace and scope of liberalization reforms, which under Nicaragua's current conditions make all the difference in the world. The Chamorro Cabinet wants to implement its program more gradually to avoid triggering further political and social conflict. The 18-point program also speaks of social spending and of protecting the most vulnerable sectors.

The program envisions a lengthy process of privatization and restructuring, involving research into each public enterprise and its contribution to the economy before decisions are made. It also envisions a continued degree of state intervention in the economy, albeit greatly reduced.

But AID is insisting on quicker and more far-reaching reforms that threaten to deepen already-widespread unrest and to undermine the very stability of the government. It wants immediate and sharp cuts in social spending, mass dismissals of public employees, an acceleration of privatization and no delays in liberalizing investment regulations.

Dollarizing the economy: The new Nicaraguan government has, in fact, gone far in implementing a stabilization program. It has devalued the currency 37 times and

brought about the "dollarization" of the economy, which has made Nicaragua one of the most expensive countries in the world. It has eliminated almost all subsidies and curtailed social spending, lifted tariffs and laid off 18,000 public and parastatal employees. It has already returned to their original owners the first 16 public firms and handed over the first 50,000 acres of public lands to private agribusiness.

Living conditions have at the same time deteriorated dramatically. The World Bank recently ranked the Nicaragua crisis the worst in Latin America. Inflation is running at over 5,300 percent annually, official unemployment has surpassed 40 percent, real wages have dropped 50 percent, the minimum monthly wage is calculated to feed a family for only three days. Hunger and disease are spreading throughout rural and urban areas. This level of misery has never before been seen in Nicaragua.

AID has now placed the government in a Catch-22. "They have done a lot, but it is not enough," the AID official said. "They still need to do a lot more."

The precipitous decline in socioeconomic conditions since the new government took office—together with political opposition to the administration's program—has already led workers to carry out two general strikes, first in May then in July.

Efforts to turn public lands over to agri-exporters and businesspeople returning from Miami have sparked land seizures by state farmworkers. Pricing, credit and exchange policies favoring agri-exports are squeezing small farmers out of production and escalating rural tensions. Cuts in education have led students to strike and to

occupy schools and government offices. Defunding of privatized public-sector factories has led trade unions to stage takeovers and "lock-ins."

On September 23, the National Workers Front (FNT), comprised of most of the country's workers and small farmers, launched a "national civic-disobedience campaign," and proclaimed, "We will struggle and resist until the government understands that the solution to the crisis is to put national interests before foreign interests." The FNT is not opposed in principle to privatization. Rather, it argues that public farms and factories should be turned over to the workers themselves as collective stockholders.

Lacayo, upon his return from Washington, told reporters he was "worried and disturbed." The country, he said, had only three alternatives: lay off thousands of state employees; reduce the salaries of all public employees by half; or close schools, health

centers and other social services.

A few days later, Chamorro announced that 25,000 more public employees would be laid off, that privatization would be accelerated and that the government would "liberate peasants from cooperatives" so that they can "have the right to buy and sell land."

AID or aid? Following his trip to Washington, Lacayo said officials appeared more interested in Eastern Europe and the Middle East these days. He lamented that "they [creditors] usually try to avoid throwing water in a bucket with holes in it."

But the U.S., after all, carries major responsibility for perforating the Nicaraguan bucket, first through 50 years of support for the Somoza dictatorship, then through 10 years of contra war.

Doesn't Nicaragua deserve better aid than AID?

W.I. Robinson is a freelance writer based in Albuquerque.

CALENDAR

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CHICAGO

October 26 & 27

125th BIRTHDAY SALUTE TO THE NATION magazine at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Keynote presentation by Jonathan Kozol, author of *Illiterate America, Rachel & Her Children and Death at an Early Age*. Program includes: Gwendolyn Brooks; Studs Terkel; *Nation* editor Victor Navasky; Poet & Writers Union member Luis Rodriguez; former managing director of Pantheon Books Andre Schiffrin; and *Chicago Reporter* editor Laura Washington. Donations for this event begin at \$8 and up—sliding scale. Co-sponsored by PEN Midwest, Guild Books, Guild Complex, 3rd Unitarian Church, and Department of Cultural Affairs/City of Chicago. Also on October 27—Booksigning for the Anthology of *NATION* writings and Round Table discussion on "Tasks and Issues Confronting the Media" at the edge of the lookingglass, 62 E. 13th St. at Michigan Blvd. For more information on both events, contact Lou Rosenbaum, (312) 525-3667.

NEW YORK

October 31

Local 1199, Drug, Hospital & Health Care Employees Union RWDSU/AFL-CIO invites you to a reception/bilingual recital to mark the opening of "FACES OF MY HOMELAND," an exhibition of photographs by Alejandro Stuart at GALLERY 1199, 310 West 43rd Street, from 5 to 7 p.m. Exhibition dates: Oct. 31-Dec. 7, 1990; Gallery hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. On closing date, Dec. 7, there will be a song recital/reception/auction. A Bread & Roses exhibition supported in part by a grant from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

ANNANDALE, NY

November 3

THE SUPREME COURT AND EQUAL PROTECTION: RACE, GENDER AND LAW FOR THE 1990S, a conference at Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featured speakers include Alan Freeman, Linda Chavez, Randall Kennedy, Kathryn Abrams, Charles Stephen Ralston and Jo Freeman. Information and registration, call Carol Nackenoff, Department of Political Studies, (914) 758-6822, ext. 230, or (914) 758-7430. Funded in part by the New York Council for the Humanities.

SAN FRANCISCO

November 9

A WORLD TRANSFORMED: SOCIALISM AND THE TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY, a meeting of the Democratic Socialists of America at 7:30 p.m. at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, Van Ness and Geary. Speakers include El Salvador opposition leader Guillermo Ungo, Longshoremen's Union President Jimmy Herman, and DSA Vice Chairs Frances Fox Piven and Bogdan Denitch. Admission \$5. For more information, call (212) 962-0390.

MINNEAPOLIS

November 9-12

CREATING CHANGE, the third annual conference of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, will be

WASHINGTON, DC

November 16

PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN ZAIRE: AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE and a dialogue among leaders of Zaire's democracy movement and their international supporters. The conference will be held at the Brookings Institution from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is sponsored by the Center for Research on Zaire, the International Center for Development Policy, and the Rainbow Lobby. Registration: \$15, \$10 for students. For more information, contact: Rainbow Lobby, 1660 L St., #204, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 457-0700.

LOVELAND, OH

November 16-18

ON GAINING A VOICE—Mary Field Belenky. How do we as women develop "minds of our own"? Mary Belenky is co-author of the groundbreaking book, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind*, which has challenged the traditional male models of knowing and learning. The program offers a unique opportunity to gain insight into our own ways of thinking as well as to increase confidence in our abilities as learners, creative thinkers and policy makers. Cost: \$100-135 for program, room and six meals. \$85-100 for commuters. For more information and registration, write or call Grailville Programs, 932 O'Bannonville Rd., Loveland, OH 45140, (513) 683-2340.

PHILADELPHIA

November 30-December 2

A NEW STAGE IN THE BATTLE FOR UNION DEMOCRACY, a conference held by the Association for Union Democracy at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel. The conference is scheduled for Friday evening, and all day Saturday and Sunday. Featured speakers include Glenn Berrien, president, Mail Handlers Union; Jerry Tucker, director, New Directions Movement; Jane Slaughter, editor, *Labor Notes*; Lewie Anderson, president, REAP; Ray Rogers, Corporate Campaign; Ron Carey, candidate for Teamsters president; Ken Paff, national organizer, Teamsters for a Democratic Union; Kim Fellner, executive director, National Writers Union; Victor Reuther, founder, UAW; and Joseph "Chip" Yablonski, attorney. For more information, contact AUD, YMCA Building, 30 Third Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217, (718) 855-6650.

EVANSTON, IL

February 15-17

Feminist graduate students at Northwestern University invite interested graduate students at universities in the Midwest to submit abstracts and/or proposals for the FIFTH ANNUAL FEMINIST GRADUATE STUDENTS' CONFERENCE to be held February 15-17, 1991. Proposals should be one page and postmarked by Nov. 30, 1990. For more information, call (708) 491-7940 or write MFGSC, Dept. Neuro-biology and Physiology, 2153 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60201.

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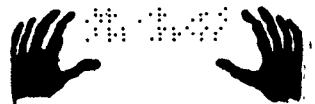
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Gas tank warfare

By Suzanne Ruta

Late nights at the lab we used to get pretty silly.

Cheng tossed me a beaker, I caught it and dropped it, it broke, I picked up the pieces, cut myself and got blood on the last batch of solution. And that's how we made the discovery—not an invention, because it worked right off, we didn't have to add a thing besides, although later, of course, we did test for quantities and established the point of diminishing returns at 50 cc blood per liter of gasoline but the curve was already slowing before that so when we published our results we went for half a pint of blood to a gallon of gasoline, and the mileage more than tripled!

Our first test drive we all rolled up our sleeves and gave. My old Chevy performed like a Honda Civic. But then the trouble began. Under the terms of our contract Bardahl got all the marketing rights and their ad agency said it would never sell to Americans, maybe the French who liked their meat *saignant* or the Masai who bled their cattle, and when we heard that we were delighted on the one hand because until then we had been worried about sourcing but now there was an obvious solution and with so many oilmen who were also cattlemen it should be easy to organize a supply network and we said but what about oxblood shoe polish and blood oranges and sangria and the Sangre de Cristo mountains and they pointed out, and they were right, that not one of those is American, really American, and what does the red in our flag stand for, Cheng asked (which he knew because he had to learn it when he was naturalized two years ago) and "I thought the term red-blooded American" still stood for something. They said Sorry, and anyway blue blood is in fashion at the moment.

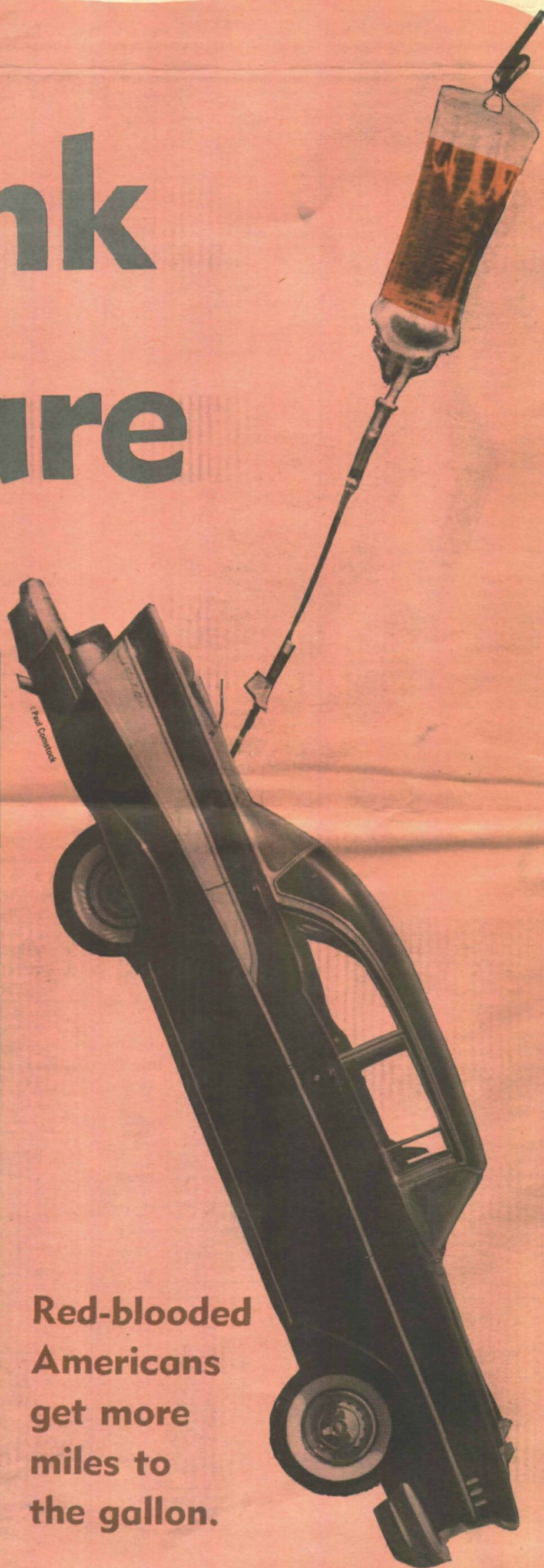
Cheng was crestfallen and to cheer him up I reminded him that a) blood is thicker than water and b) oil and water don't mix

and therefore c) we had to keep on trying, so we ran some more tests, about six months' worth, and it turned out that nothing we tried, monkey, cat, rabbit, hamster, steer, goldfish, performed half as well as those first runs when, by the way, I can see what you're thinking, we were all perfectly sober and still more so at the end of the experiment, we didn't need controls, the whole damn country was our control, and we talked it over and decided to resign and take our findings public.

And then Cheng's girlfriend remembered all the donors the Red Cross turned down because of the epidemic and we knew we had to go in business for ourselves. Why just three blocks away in downtown New Haven was everything we needed and luckily Jyoti is getting her doctorate in microbiology and knows the collecting techniques and outside the methadone clinic we found our first five donors in half an hour and we told them it was for the good of science and they seemed pleased and of course we also paid them as much as they could make in a week at McDonald's or with a messenger service that would never have hired them anyway.

And with our supply line in place we ran an ad in *Auto Week*, quarter page, back of the book, and pretty soon we were the biggest open secret on the whole East Coast and one thing led to another and next week the mayor is giving us the key to the city because in just a year the slums on Congress Avenue have given way to really neat little four-story garden apartments, the inner cities from Boston to Chicago have begun to turn around, Detroit is hiring back the major layoffs while holding on to the Mexicans who replaced them over the border, the market is up again and when people ask us how we thought of it, we pull a serious mug and say it's unbelievable isn't it, what a little fresh blood will do for the American economy? ■

Suzanne Ruta is author of *Stalin in the Bronx and Other Stories* (Grove Press).



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